The Role of Presbyterian Dissent in Colonial and Revolutionary Virginia, 1740-1785

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THE ROLE OF PRESBYTERIAN DISSENT IN COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY VIRGINIA, 1740-1785: AN ABSTRACT

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From 1607 until about 1740 the established Anglican church had nearly exclusive claim to the ecclesiastical loyalty of Virginians. The arrival of large groups of Old Side Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the Shenandoah Valley beginning about 1740 and, simultaneously, the formation of several New Light Presbyterian congregations in the Tidewater and Southside in response to the Great Awakening challenged that domination. This study examines the nature of that Presbyterian challenge, the response of the church and government, the place of Presbyterians in the political, economic, and intellectual life of Virginia, and the part played by Presbyterians in bringing about religious liberty in Virginia.

Response to the newcomers and converts by county officials, the government in Williamsburg, and parish ministers and vestrymen was occasionally hostile. In the mid-1740's several lay leaders of the revival were tried for blasphemy and sabbath-breaking and several county courts refused to license dissenting meeting houses. These legal encounters arose because of

widespread misunderstanding over the extent to which the 1689 English Toleration Act applied in Virginia,if at all.

Much credit for the cessation of official harassment of dissenters is due Samuel Davies, Presbyterian minister in Hanover County 1747-1759, who conformed with current toleration practices in Virginia but worked with leading English dissenters to secure a broader interpretation of the Toleration Act. Davies trained several ministers, established a Cherokee mission in the Carolinas, and carried out a program of evangelization and education of slaves unmatched by any Anglican effort. The hardships endured by the Scots-Irish Presbyterians in the west during the French and Indian war and their defense of the colony further explain the hands-off policy the government adopted towards the dissenters.

From 1755 to 1775 Presbyterianism quietly flourished in Virginia. The formation of Hanover Presbytery helped unite scattered congregations and ministers. With Davies' departure the focus of the denomination shifted to the southside and valley where dissenters were numbered among the leading citizens and served in a variety of local government offices, with an occasional Presbyterian elected to the House of Burgesses. The traditional Presbyterian commitment to education was manifest in several small classical schools, in an abortive scheme to establish a comprehensive academy, college and divinity school, and finally in the founding of Prince Edward Academy, Liberty

Hall Academy, and Washington-Henry Academy. The two former schools (now Hampden-Sydney and Washington and Lee) were chartered as colleges by 1783, providing an alternative to William and Mary and strengthening the inclination to denominational rather than public, secular education in Virginia.

The quiescent toleration question reappeared in 1772 when the radical public reaction to the sudden growth of Separate Baptists in Virginia prompted the introduction of a restrictive toleration bill in the assembly. This opened a prolonged political battle between dissenters and churchmen, the former seeking equal footing for all churches on the ground that Virginia's 1776 Declaration of Rights guaranteed it. Dissenters petitioned nearly every assembly during the Revolution for redress of grievances, but usually received only minor concessions. Hanover Presbytery in a series of petitions and memorials provided intellectual leadership to the disestablishment movement but was less adamant in its demands than the Baptists, and for a while was willing to settle for a general assessment rather than complete freedom of religion. In 1785, however, the presbytery threw its support behind Jefferson's proposed Act for Establishing Religious Freedom, flooding the legislature with petitions in its behalf and adding significantly to the support the measure needed for passage.

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K.L.B.

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PROLOGUE

Early in the summer of 1773 when His Majesty's subjects in Virginia had scarcely given thought to separation from the mother country, the treasurer of the colony, a prototype of a Virginia gentleman, felt impelled by some publications of a clergyman critical of the established church to take pen in hand and defend Virginia's Mother Church from her misguided minister. Speaking of the alliance between church and state under which he and all native Virginians had been raised, Robert Carter Nicholas wrote that he considered it

> a Doctrine necessarily and essentially incident to our religious and civil establishments. . . . Need you be told, at this time of Day, that the best Defenders of Christianity and the ablest Expounders of the sacred Writings are to be found in the Bosom of the Church of England?[1]

A quarter century later that church which Nicholas considered the essence of truth, the moral mentor of society, and the bulwark of the state had been shorn of its power, prestige, and property, and had lost much of its membership. Nicholas, perhaps fortunately, did not live to see the debacle in which even his own sons played an important role.

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[1] Robert Carter Nicholas to "A Gentleman who is pleased to style himself A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND," (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette, 3 June 1773, pp. 1-2.

It is necessary to consider what caused the changed attitude toward this venerable institution in Virginia, and what, if anything, replaced the established church to care for the spiritual needs of Virginians. The disestablishment of the church, occurring as it did during and shortly after the Revolution could be written off merely as a social change resulting from the war. This, it would seem, is too simple a solution to the problem. To be sure, the spirit of the Revolution was a critical factor in bringing about disestablishment, but the process in Virginia was not a sudden one occurring at the height of wartime enthusiasm; it was a gradual one which took place throughout the eight years of the war, and was not completely accomplished until fifteen years after the war ended.

Rather than considering the disestablishment of the church and the instituting of religious liberty in Virginia just a Revolutionary offshoot, it seems more reasonable to examine thoroughly the colonial antecedents: to examine the structure of the established church as it developed in Virginia, and to probe for efforts to develop a viable alternative to a single, state-dominated church in the half century before separation from Britain was contemplated.

Our concern here is with that search for alternatives to the established church, and particularly with one group engaged in the search, the Presbyterians. Through a detailed examination of the development of that denomination in Virginia we hope to answer a number of questions about the place of religion in that colony. Among the areas we shall consider are: (1) the conditions in the established church which promoted the growth of dissent; (2) the treatment of dissent by the civil government of which the established church was a part; (3) the impact of dissent on the population; (4) the reaction of the established church to competition from dissenters; (5) the role of dissenters in the secular and civil life of Virginia; (6) the intellectual and educational contributions of the dissenters in Virginia; (7) the impact of the Revolution on dissenting denominations and the established church; and (8) the role of the dissenters in promoting religious liberty in Virginia.

Although they were only one of several groups of dissenters in Virginia at the time of the Revolution, the Presbyterians are excellent subjects for a study of these aspects of the intermingling of religion and politics in colonial Virginia. They were the only dissenting group of significant size over a period of several decades before the war. As a group and as individuals they took an active role in the political life of the colony, and they were representative of a broad cross-section of Virginia society. A detailed examination and an understanding of the Presbyterians in Virginia prior to the Revolution helps shed light on the nature of colonial Virginia society by supplying information about the degree of flexibility in matters of religion and politics, and the extent of social mobility in that society. The challenges encountered by the Presbyterian dissenters in the government, the religious establishment, the economic structure, and the society in general and the manner in which they were met have much to say to us about the democratization process in early American society.

I. THE ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND IN VIRGINIA

Unlike Massachusetts Bay, Virginia was not founded as a Zion in the Wilderness, a place of refuge for those persecuted for their religious beliefs. But neither were the leaders of the Virginia Company and the settlers they enlisted irreligious men. They were Englishmen who were for the most part Anglicans, and their church played an important role in their lives. The determination of the Virginia Company to assure the church an important place in the extension of England to the New World was manifested in its appointment in 1606 of the Reverend Richard Hakluyt as the first rector of Jamestown. The aging Hakluyt, whose travel writing had been instrumental in turning English interest to the west, appointed Robert Hunt as his vicar at Jamestown.[1] From 1607 daily worship according to the rubric of the Church of England became a part of life in Virginia. In 1610 Lord Delaware arrived at Jamestown with a new charter and for a short time enforced a new code of laws which included a heavy stress on religious observance, including required daily worship. With the introduction of private ownership of land in 1614, parishes were established in each political division and 100 acres was given by the company as a glebe for the minister, who also received tithes from the parishioners.[1]

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[1] Walter Herbert Stowe, "The Reverend Richard Hakluyt (c. 1553-1616) and the First Charter of Virginia (1606)," _Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church_, XXVI (March 1957), pp. 10-14.

It was the intention of the Virginia Company and later of the Crown, to extend the English ecclesiastical system in America, a system which has been called "a huge collection of creaking and grinding machinery with a relation to religion which was historical rather than apt."[2] This intention was made clear in the laws passed by the first General Assembly in 1619, regulating the ministry and the conduct of services in accordance with the "Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical" of the Church of England.[3]

All of England was divided into parishes of varying sizes, and all men living within the boundaries were considered members of the parish. The minister was usually a rector, who had the right to all income of the benefice from tithes, the glebe, and fees, and out of which he paid obligations to the bishop, hired a vicar if necessary, and repaired the parsonage.[1] Authority to appoint the minister of a parish in England, called "advowson," was vested in the owner who built the church on his property. The people of a parish never selected their own minister directly. The bishop approved the appointment of the owner of the advowson, and the minister was then inducted into his office for life.[2] The minister was aided by the vestry and churchwardens. The vestry consisted of about a dozen men chosen by the parishioners to levy tithes, pass on parish accounts, and keep up the church property. The vestry chose two from their number to execute these policies and report to the bishop on parish conditions.[3]

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[1] George McLaren Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church and the Political Conditions Under Which It Grew: An Interpretation of the Records of the Colony of Virginia and of the Anglican Church of that Colony, 1607-1727 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1947), pp. 17-18, 30-41.

[2] Spencer Ervin, "The Establishment, Government, and Functioning of the Church in Colonial Virginia," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, XXVI (March 1957), pp. 74-75.

[3] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 67-68.

Although the government in England and in Virginia intended to reproduce the Church of England in the colony, their failure to do so was obvious from the beginning, and this is an important fact to understand in any study of religious developments in Virginia throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most characteristic feature of the Anglican Church in contrast to other Protestant churches is its episcopal system of government, yet Virginia was not a diocese, and no bishop set foot on her soil until after the American

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[1] Ervin, "Establishment . . . of the Church in Colonial Virginia," pp. 67-69.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 43.

[3] Ervin, "Establishment . . . of the Church in Colonial Virginia," p. 68.

Revolution. The king alone, as temporal head of the church, had the power to create a new diocese and appoint its bishop, and the kings did not choose to do this for Virginia. Instead the colony was placed under the nominal care of the Bishop of London, and the royal instructions to the governors stated that the governor was to perform those civil duties of bishops in England such as granting marriage licenses, and certain ecclesiastical functions such as inducting rectors presented by vestries.[1] Without a bishop, prospective communicants would have to travel to England to receive the sacrament of confirmation, which few colonials were able to do. Without a bishop deacons could not be ordained, nor lay readers properly trained, and ministers would have to be ordained in England before coming to the colony. And, particularly dangerous for the discipline of the colonial church, was the fact that without a bishop present to hold ecclesiastical courts, there was no way to discipline the clergy, for they were not considered liable in civil courts according to English practice. Consequently, though established in Virginia by the Assembly, the Anglican Church could never function as in England. The deviations from the English norm increased with each year until "Virginia's Mother Church" became a unique institution.

The decade from 1625-1635 after Virginia became a royal colony was particularly important in the development of the

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 67-68, 86.

Virginia church, for the basic laws which guided the church throughout the colonial period were adopted, and the two basic features of the Virginia church were developed: the parish and the vestry. Because the parish was the only ecclesiastical unit permitted in Virginia, it became a much more important division than the English parish, and was, in fact, the center of religious life for all Virginians. The vestry, as the governing body of the parish, not only arranged financial matters as in England, but also selected the minister. In addition to their ecclesiastical duties, the vestrymen undertook a variety of civil functions including care for the poor of the parish, binding out of orphans, and the processioning of lands to check the validity of surveys.[1]

In the remainder of the seventeenth century the Virginia vestry became one of the most influential and powerful institutions in the colony. These vestries revolutionized the Anglican pattern of clerical control. In England, once a rector had been inducted he could be removed from his cure only by a bishop through the mechanism of an ecclesiastical trial. To protect themselves from life tenure of an undesirable minister, the Virginia vestries developed a system by which they omitted presentation of the minister of their choice to the governor for induction, and instead made a series of annual agreements with him, thus retaining the right to dismiss him. This independence of the local congregation and the exercise of its right to choose its own minister is as congregational a feature as could be found among the churches the Puritans and Separatists were setting up in New England.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, 87, 91-95.

The vestries maintained their power in several ways. Although a law of 1644/45 provided for their selection by the parishioners, after the initial election, the vestrymen were authorized to fill the vacancies that occurred, making the group a self-perpetuating institution.[2] Vestry autonomy was further strengthened in the Civil War and Commonwealth periods. When the war broke out Virginia remained loyal to the king and the church; when Parliament abolished the Book of Common Prayer, the Virginia General Assembly passed an act requiring its use. With the execution of both the spiritual and temporal heads of the church in England, the Burgesses, as the supreme authority in Virginia, delegated larger ecclesiastical authority to the only church unit available--the vestries.[3]

After the Restoration, the General Assembly and church leaders made the only notable attempt to strengthen the Virginia church by departing from the congregational pattern it had developed. They sent a deputation in 1660 to request a visitation from the bishop to ordain many lay readers into the diaconate, the establishment of fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge to train ministers for service in Virginia, to collect funds for a proposed college in the colony, and to urge that Virginia be made a diocese and a bishop sent over. Nothing came of the project. In the midst of the plague and fire in London, the war with the Dutch, and the frivolity of Charles II, there was little interest in England in improving the church in Virginia. In 1672, however, the king did become interested in sending a bishop to Virginia and selected his nominee, but for unknown reasons this project, too, failed.[1]

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[1] Bradford Spangenburg, "Vestrymen in the House of Burgesses; Protection of Local Vestry Autonomy during James Blair's Term as Commissary, (1690-1743)," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, XXXII (June 1963), pp. 81-83, 96.

[2] W. W. Hening, The Statutes at Large of Virginia (New York: 1819-1823), II, 44-45, Act of March 1661-1662, 14 Charles II.

[3] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 121-126, 130.

The next effort to bring more orderly government to the Virginia Church began in 1689 when the Bishop of London created the post of commissary and appointed the Reverend James Blair to that office in the colony. It might be said that this effort to introduce "viable Anglican policy in Virginia . . . was too little and too late," for the Virginia vestrymen were convinced from experience that lay vestries should have the supreme authority in a parish. In their chosen duties of selecting and removing ministers, the vestries had assumed what were in England the powers of the ecclesiastical courts which regulated affairs relating to the tenure and behavior of the clergy.

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[1] Ibid., 175-176, 183-184.

Thus, when Commissary Blair issued a proclamation in June 1690 that he planned to visit the parishes in 1691 to hold ecclesiastical courts, he directly challenged the power of the vestries. In some fashion, the House of Burgesses, most of whose members were vestrymen, managed to block the plan.[1]

This unique independence of the Virginia church was further strengthened during Alexander Spottswood's tenure as governor (1710-1722). Spottswood believed that all political and personal rights in Virginia derived from the sovereign, and that he, as representative of the king, should nominate all clergymen, and that the vestries must present them to him for induction. He put this belief into practice with appointments in several parishes and drew upon himself the wrath of the vestries involved. Both sides secured legal opinions in England and then agreed to present the case to the General Court in Virginia, but it never came to trial, for the Privy Council removed Spottswood as governor. The vestries returned to their former practice of selecting their own ministers, and no governor thereafter dared interfere.[2]

Thus, by the time Governor William Gooch arrived in Virginia in 1727, the character of the church was firmly fixed as a series of autonomous units, the parishes, each under the control of a strong body of locally prominent laymen. Virginia had an episcopal church without a bishop, for in spite of the nominal power of the Bishop of London over the church in that colony, in fact that prelate exercised little control there. His deputy, the commissary, whom he appointed to represent him in the colony, simply did not possess the powers of office such as ordination and confirmation that a bishop did. Lay control of the church was further emphasized by the role of the Virginia General Assembly in legislating on matters of religion, morality, and parochial appeals. This form of church government which the Virginians had evolved over a century was well-suited to their way of life, and they had no desire to upset the pattern they had established in any way.

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[1] Spangenburg, "Vestrymen in the House of Burgesses," pp. 79-80, 83, 86-87; Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 228-232, 285-286.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 344.

This satisfaction with, and overwhelming adherence to, the established church should not create the impression that there was no place for dissent in religious matters in Virginia, for that had never been the case. From the beginning of the colony there had been diversity of religious opinion and practice which in some cases had been welcomed into the colony by the government. This is an important fact which historians of dissenting denominations have often overlooked. At the same time, it is important to stress that most of these dissenting groups were small, scattered, and were not engaged in major schemes of proselytization which might upset the balance of civil and religious affairs that the Virginians had established.

In the very early years, the Virginia settlers and their government displayed a liberal attitude toward religious nonconformists. The council of the Virginia Company personally selected all of the ministers sent to the colony, "and every one of them, as far as we now know, belonged to the Puritan school within the Church." In fact, of the five ministers in Virginia in 1619, two were probably of Genevan or Presbyterian ordination. The Virginia Company itself consisted largely of adherents to the Puritan wing of the church. Sir Edwin Sandys, son of the Archbishop of York, and a moving force in the project, had been educated in Geneva. Sandys was a member of the Church of England, but was also a firm believer in religious liberty. It was he who obtained permission from the archbishop and the king for the Pilgrims at Leyden to settle in Virginia, and it was certainly not his fault that they landed on the bleak New England coast by mistake.[1]

There is evidence of several early settlements of Puritans in Virginia. We do not know if any of these settlers were of the Presbyterian or Congregationalist faction. Many of those who arrived in 1611 with Sir Thomas Dale and founded Henricopolis were Puritans. By 1622 several hundred Puritans had settled on Lawne's Creek, Isle of Wight County, under Robert and Richard Bennett. In 1621 Daniel Gookin arrived from Ireland with eighty Puritans and settled at Newport News, then in 1637 moved to present Nansemond County. In 1622 Captain Nathaniel Basse settled 100 people near the Bennett group, with whom they were associated. These groups were welcomed into the colony, and in 1629 Nathaniel Basse and Richard Bennett were elected to the House of Burgesses.[1]

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 18, 28-29, 68-69, 73. For an excellent study of one of these Puritan ministers in Virginia see Harry Culverwell Porter, "Alexander Whitaker: Cambridge Apostle to Virginia," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, XIV (July 1957), pp. 317-343.

The acceptance of the Puritans changed somewhat after the king took over the administration of the colony from the company in 1624. The General Assembly in 1629-30 passed a law requiring that all ministers in the colony conform to the canons of the Church of England, probably to assure some standard of quality in the ministers coming to the colony now that the Virginia Company could no longer interview and handpick each man. The law did not prevent dissenters from settling in the colony, but did require conformity on the part of ministers officiating publicly.[2]

Attitudes toward the Puritans in Virginia changed dramatically in 1642 when the Civil War broke out in England, for at just that time the Nansemond Puritans, who had no minister for their churches, applied not to England for ministers, but to

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[1] John H. Latané, "The Early Relations between Maryland Virginia," The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Thirteenth Series, III-IV (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1895), pp. 33-38.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 88-90. Text in Hening, Statutes, I, 149.

Boston. The elders in Boston complied with the request and sent three men recommended by the Massachusetts General Court who arrived in November 1642. These Massachusetts men presumably preached and may have introduced congregationalist practices in Nansemond parish churches until March 1643 when the government took action against them. The governor and council ordered that the missionaries return to Massachusetts immediately and ordered that a £100 fine be imposed on any shipmaster bringing another puritan into the colony. The General Assembly passed another law requiring conformity "to the orders and constitution of the Church of England" as the prerequisite for admission to the colony in the capacity of a public or private preacher or teacher.[1] In 1648 Governor Berkeley banished Richard Bennett, leader of the Isle of Wight Puritans, an elder in the community, William Durand, and their minister, the Reverend Thomas Harrison. At the petition of Harrison's congregation, the English Council of State in October 1649 ordered Berkeley to reinstate Harrison. By this time however, the new Protestant government of Maryland, at the behest of Bennett and Durand, invited the Virginia Puritans to settle in Maryland. Over 300 of them left Virginia by 1650 and settled on the Severn River.[1] This move effectively eliminated the majority of Puritans from Virginia just a year before their triumph in the Civil War at home.

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[1] Latané, "Early Relations," pp. 40-41 justifies the request to Boston on the grounds of the necessity of these pious people to have someone to care for their spiritual needs. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 120 interprets their action as that of "Fifth Columnists" seeking leaders to organize puritan sentiment in this southern colony that was loyal to the crown and the church.

Only a few years after the removal of the Puritans on grounds that seem more political than religious, Virginia was faced with a new group of dissenters who were markedly apolitical, but encountered difficulty with the government from the beginning. Although Quakers were not persecuted as in Massachusetts, neither were they welcomed in Virginia, for their doctrines and practices threatened to upset the balance of society as understood by the seventeenth century Englishman. Their refusal to be baptized and their emotional preaching were repugnant to those accustomed to the rites and orderly worship of the Anglican Church. But it was the Quaker's refusal to bear arms that was the most objectionable to the colonists' living in a frontier situation. He could not be counted on in the event of Indian attack, and his refusal to help might result in the massacre of neighboring families.[2]

We do not know when the Quakers first appeared in Virginia, but they had made their presence known by March 1659/60, at which time the General Assembly passed "An Act for the Suppression of the Quakers."[3] Shortly after this Quakers on the

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[1] Latané, "Early Relations," pp. 41-47.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 194-197.

[3] Hening, Statutes, I, 532-533.

Eastern Shore of Virginia petitioned the governor of Maryland to permit them to move to that colony, and with the assistance of that government, about 150 Quakers moved north to the Nanticoke River.[1] In the decade following the Restoration in England, the Virginia General Assembly passed a series of laws designed to prevent Quakers from entering Virginia. These included the 1661/62 act that "Sundays not be profaned," which included a fine of 200 pounds of tobacco for each Quaker found guilty of assembling at an unlawful conventicle; the act of December 1662 "against Persons that refuse to have their children baptized," and the September 1663 act "prohibiting the unlawful assembling of Quakers."[2] An act adopted in 1666 imposing a fine of 100 pounds of tobacco on anyone refusing to appear for militia muster was probably also directed at the Quakers.[3] The laws seem to have failed in their purpose, for the records show few cases of enforcement, and Quakers continued to live in the colony. After the toleration act of 1689 in England, the laws against Quaker worship were removed from the Virginia statute books, and the only harassment Quakers may have felt were fines for non-attendance at muster. In 1705 the General Assembly removed another disability by permitting a Quaker to make his

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[1] Rufus M. Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies (London: The Macmillan Company, 1911), p. 335.

[2] Hening, Statutes, II, 48, 165-166, 180-183.

[3] Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies, p. 319.

"solemn affirmation and declaration" in place of the usual oath in court.[1]

Quaker strength in this early period was centered in Henrico and Nansemond counties, the very areas where puritans had been strongest. There were probably no regular settled meetings before 1673 when George Fox visited the colony and suggested the formation of a General Meeting for Virginia.[2] By 1691 there were Quakers in Nansemond, Henrico, Charles City, York, Norfolk, Isle of Wight, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, and Warwick counties.[3] As early as 1698 there was a meeting at Black Creek near the Pamunkey River in present Hanover County which the famous English Quaker, Thomas Story, visited that year.[4] In 1739 a large migration of Quakers settled on Polecat Creek in present Caroline County, and later that year the Caroline and Hanover groups joined to form Cedar Creek Monthly

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 192; Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies, p. 337 (from the 1705 "Act for Establishing the General Court," text in Hening, Statutes, III, 298).

[2] Jones, Quakers in the American Colonies, p. 306.

[3] Anna Thomas, The Story of Baltimore Yearly Meeting from 1672 to 1938 (Baltimore: The Weant Press, Inc., 1938?), p. 67.

[4] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 197-198, 205n. Story in his Journal reported a warm welcome from everyone he encountered in Virginia, including the governor and officials of counties in which he preached.

Meeting.[1] Just prior to this an even larger group of Quakers, consisting of about seventy families settled near Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley under the leadership of Alexander Ross, a Pennsylvania Quaker, and Morgan Bryan. By 1744 there were three monthly meetings in northern Virginia: Hopewell in Frederick County, founded 1735; Providence in Berkeley County, W. Va., founded 1738; and Fairfax County in 1744.[2] In succeeding years several other meetings were established as the population grew and moved south and westward. These western Quakers apparently encountered very little difficulty with the authorities as they were located so far west and in such scattered settlements, and because there was little of either the colonial government or the established church in evidence to be disturbed by their activities.

While the first group of dissenters in Virginia, the Puritans, had left under political pressure, and the second group, the Quakers, had thrived and been tolerated in spite of legal efforts to hamper their religious practices, the third group, the Calvinist Huguenots, were welcomed enthusiastically by the government and in time were completely absorbed into the life of the colony. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 sent nearly half a million French Protestants fleeing from their native land. Many sought refuge in England, and a few families had come to Virginia by 1700. In 1698 a movement began in London to send large numbers of them to Virginia to form their own community. Virginians were enthusiastic about the plan and the General Assembly selected a 10,000 acre site at Manakin town in Henrico County.[1]

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[1] Mrs. Douglas Summers Brown, "Cedar Creek Monthly Meeting and Its Meeting House," The William and Mary Quarterly, Series 2, XIX (July 1939), pp. 293-295. The Caroline Quakers could have come from Pennsylvania, but more likely from Quaker settlements south of the James. Thomas E. Campbell, Colonial Caroline: A History of Caroline County, Virginia (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1954), p. 93.

[2] Joint Committee of Hopewell Friends, assisted by John W. Wayland, Hopewell Friends History, 1734-1934, Frederick County, Virginia: Records of Hopewell Monthly Meetings and Meetings Reporting to Hopewell, Two Hundred Years of History and Genealogy (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing House, Inc., 1936), pp. 12-14, 46-49, 58, 70.

Before leaving England, the refugees were declared citizens by King William and provided with Bibles, Books of Common Prayer and other religious books in French, and funds to build their own church in Virginia.[2] Nearly 500 French Protestants arrived in Virginia aboard four ships in 1700. Half went to Manakin and the remainder chose to settle in other areas of the colony.[3] Most of the French were destitute when they reached the colony. In spite of monetary aid and food from the government, they were slow in getting their town started and crops planted, and were further bothered by sickness. In addition, they were divided into factions. As a result of all these difficulties, the Council in December 1700 advised Governor Nicholson to ask the king that no more French refugees be sent to Virginia.[1]

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[1] R. A. Brock (ed.), Documents Chiefly Unpublished, Relating to the Huguenot Emigration to Virginia and the Settlement at Manakin-Town, with an Appendix of Genealogies (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1886), pp. viii, 5-8.

[2] Order of Council for the Relief of the French Refugees going to plant in Virginia, 7 March 1699/1700, in William Stevens Perry (ed.), Papers Relating to the History of the Church in Virginia AD 1650-1776 (Hartford, Conn.: privately printed, 1870), pp. 113-114.

[3] When "le Nassau" arrived in the York River with 191 passengers the Virginians had not expected, the Council on

The General Assembly, in contrast to their treatment of the Quakers, made liberal provision for the religious life of the Huguenots, and in doing so, set a precedent for the treatment of foreign dissenters in their midst. When the French arrived in England, the toleration act had been in effect over a decade, and it would be expected that they would have been admitted as dissenters under its provisions. Instead, it seems understood that these Huguenots sent to Virginia would be taken into the established church, for the three French ministers that accompanied them had all been licensed by the Bishop of London according to the procedures employed for all Anglican ministers sent to Virginia.[2] In December 1700 the General Assembly set aside the Manakin area as a separate parish for the French, called King William's parish. For a period of seven years they were free from the payment of any sort of public or county

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9 March 1700 decided to help as many as possible settle at Manakin, but to permit the others to go where they wished in the colony. Some did not stay long, for Col. George Mason wrote the governor in October 1701 that the French refugees in Stafford County had all gone to Maryland. Brock, Huguenot Documents, 37-39, 44.

[1] Ibid., pp. 62-66, 26-28, 37. [2] Ibid., p. 55.

levies, including the tithe. In 1705 the Assembly exempted King William Parish from the law requiring that every parish minister receive 16,000 pounds tobacco annually, and allowed them to pay their own French minister what they were able.[1] These liberal provisions allowed the Huguenots to have their own vestry and minister, to manage their own finances, and to be free of obligations to the surrounding English parish of Henrico. In time the Huguenots became assimilated into the way of life in Virginia. They abandoned French language, married into English families and many left the Manakin area. Thus, they lost their identity as dissenters when the General Assembly relaxed the standards of the establish church to encompass the Huguenots.

Shortly before the Huguenot refugees arrived in Virginia amid confusion and fanfare, another group of Calvinists was quietly entering the colony. Presbyterians from Northern Ireland were trickling into Virginia and wanted ministers of their own persuasion. A few such ministers came, formed congregations under legal arrangements, and but for the fact that most of the groups were short-lived, might have set a healthy standard for the expansion of religious dissent in the Old Dominion.

The Reverend Francis Makemie came to Virginia quite by accident from Maryland when a storm blew his ship, en route to

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[1] Ibid., p. 60; Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 263; Hening, Statutes, III, 478-479.

South Carolina, into the Elizabeth River in 1684.[1] Makemie had visited the area the year before and discovered that the minister of Lynnhaven Parish was of Presbyterian ordination. Now that their minister had died, the people of Lynnhaven urged Makemie to stay among them. He remained at least a year and wrote Increase Mather of the fair treatment he had received in Virginia.[2]

Makemie was replaced in Lynnhaven by the Reverend Josias Mackie, also a Presbyterian, who became the incumbent of Elizabeth River Parish.[3] He remained in that post until 1692 when Governor Nicholson discharged him in accordance with an order of the Virginia Council of May 1691 forbidding any vestry to retain a minister not conforming to the canons of the Church of England.[4] After his dismissal, Mackie appeared before the court of Princess Anne County to qualify as a dissenting minister under the provisions of the English toleration act of 1689. Two other meeting houses were certified by the courts of Norfolk County and Princess Anne County by 1693.[1] Although there is no record of harassment by officials, the congregations did not thrive, for in 1712 the Presbytery of Philadelphia received a report of "the melancholy circumstances Mr. John Macky, in Elizabeth River, Virginia, labours under," and after Mackie died in 1716 the groups died out.[2]

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[1] Makemie was born of Scottish parents in Donegal, Ireland. In 1681 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Laggan and probably ordained as a missionary to America and the West Indies in 1682. About 1683 he settled on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He considered himself an itinerant minister to care for the scattered Presbyterian flock in the colonies. William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, First Series (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1850), p. 42.

[2] Lynnhaven Parish, Lower Norfolk County, was adjacent to Nansemond where Puritans had been active earlier. It seems more than coincidental that three successive ministers in this area were Presbyterian. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 252.

[3] Mackie's early life is obscure. He arrived in the colony with the permission of Francis Howard, Lord Howard of Effingham, governor 1684-1688, who evidently understood that Mackie was a Presbyterian at the time he allowed him to take charge of a parish. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 269n.

[4] Ibid., I, 255.

Meanwhile, after leaving the Elizabeth River area, Francis Makemie continued his interesting career. By 1690 he had settled in Accomac County on Virginia's Eastern Shore, and the following year was in London, where he met Increase Mather. In 1692 he returned to Accomac and wrote a pamphlet which Mather had printed in Boston in 1694.[3] Makemie married the daughter of a wealthy Accomac merchant and engaged in trading ventures with his new father-in-law.[1]

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[1] Ibid., I, 269n. From a report of the justices of Princess Anne County, 4 October 1699, prepared at the order of the council. In 1691 Lower Norfolk County had been divided into Norfolk County and Princess Anne County. Morgan P. Robinson, "Virginia Counties: Those Resulting from Virginia Legislation," Virginia State Library Bulletin, No. 9 (1916), p. 165.

[2] Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, 22 September 1712, Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Embracing the Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, from A.D. 1706 to 1716: (etc.) (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), p. 26.

[3] Leonard J. Trinterud, The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1949), p. 27. The pamphlet was An Answer to George Keith's Libel.

Makemie had not neglected his calling, and in April 1699 appeared before the governor and council of Virginia asking a proclamation of liberty of conscience agreeable to English laws, and forbidding the interruption of dissenters in the exercise of their religion. Such a request must have been precipitated by activities directed against Makemie's congregation. The governor informed Makemie "that all dissenters under his government shall have such liberty allowed them as the law directs Provided they use it civilly and quietly and do not disturb the peace of the Government. . . ."[2] That October the justices of Accomac court ordered that Makemie's houses at Pocomoke and Onancock be registered as dissenting preaching places.[3]

Makemie seems to have concentrated on strengthening these congregations on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia for the next five years. In 1704 he was in London where he published another pamphlet, and the following two years he worked with Presbyterian congregations in the middle colonies where he was instrumental in founding the first presbytery in America.[1]

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[1] While in Barbados for 2-3 years, presumably as a merchant and minister, Makemie wrote Truths in a True Light, a Pastoral Letter to the Reformed Protestants in Barbados (Edinburgh, 1699) urging Protestant unity in the face of papal threat. Trinterud, Forming of an American Tradition, p. 27. He returned to Accomac in 1698 when he and his wife inherited 2000 acres on the Eastern Shore and four slaves from her father. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 427.

[2] H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, Vol. I (June 11, 1680-June 22, 1699) (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1925), p. 427.

[3] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 268n.

Unfortunately, Makemie died in 1706, and with no one to minister to them, his congregations in Virginia gradually died out. The apparent ease with which Makemie won recognition from the governor and council of the applicability of the provisions of the English toleration act in Virginia, and the willingness of the courts of Norfolk, Princess Anne, and Accomac counties to register Makemie and Mackie under provisions of that act, indicate that Virginia was perfectly agreeable to the presence of dissenters so long as they would abide by the letter and spirit of the law. Although these decisions were a matter of public record, several decades later when the dissenter question became a major issue in the colony, there lingered a degree of undertainty concerning the rights and privileges of dissenters.

Historians of Presbyterianism have often stated that after Makemie's death the denomination disappeared in Virginia and did not return until the late 1730's when the Scots-Irish moved into the Shenandoah Valley.[1] Such statements not only overlook Mackie's work in the Norfolk area for nearly a decade after Makemie's death, but also omit documentary evidence that the Synod of Philadelphia, formed in 1717, made several vigorous efforts to promote the expansion of Presbyterianism in Virginia.

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[1] The pamphlet was A Plain and Friendly Persuasive to the Inhabitants of Virginia and Maryland for Promoting Towns and Cohabitation, written at the behest of a member of Mackie's Elizabeth River congregation. Trinterud, Forming of an American Tradition, pp. 29-30.

In addition to the Presbyterian congregations in Accomac, Norfolk, and Princess Anne counties, others were formed in the early years of the eighteenth century in King George, Westmoreland, and Stafford counties in the Northern Neck. In 1709 a young Scottish minister, James Anderson, moved to this area with the intention of settling, but left soon because of ill treatment he received from some Virginians.[2] In 1717, 1720, and 1721 several citizens of Westmoreland and Richmond counties were presented to grand juries for worshipping in conventicles and for non-attendance at the parish church. Evidence seems to indicate that they proved they were Presbyterians and the charges were accordingly dismissed.[1] These may have been the "people of Potomoke" who appealed to the Synod of Philadelphia in 1719 for a settled minister. They received a supply minister, but the Synod did not settle him there, and the name Potomoke disappears from Synod records.[2]

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[1] Foote, a standard authority on the subject says, "For about thirty years after the death of Makemie, the number and influence of Presbyterians in Virginia were small. Not one flourishing congregation could be found, nor one active minister lived, in her bounds." Sketches of Virginia, I, 84; and again, "For some years after the death of Makemie there was no congregation or colony of Presbyterians in Virginia." Ibid., I, 98. James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 207 says that in spite of Makemie and Mackie's efforts, "the faith of the Scotch-Irish was not represented anywhere in the colony in the 1730's."

[2] James Anderson to the Rev. John Stirling, Master of the College of Glasgow, 1710. Original in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; microfilm copy from Records of Lexington Presbytery, University of Virginia Library, reel no. 103.

Presbyterianism did not disappear from the Northern Neck, however. In April 1724 the Northumberland County Court referred the 1723 petition of a group wanting "to set up a Presbyterian meeting house" to the governor and council.[3] The council decision is not known, but this may have been the group which petitioned the Synod in September 1722 for supplies. Three ministers were sent to them in 1723 and four ordered to go in 1724 with a letter to the governor. Only one of the four fulfilled his mission, and after that responsibility for the group was turned over to the Presbytery of New Castle.[1] We cannot know the extent of assistance this presbytery offered because its records are not extant. However, that at least one Presbyterian minister had been active in Virginia, probably in the Northern Neck, we know from an unusual entry in the Synod minutes for 1733. The Reverend Hugh Stevenson had laid before the Synod a representation regarding the "harsh and injurious usage which he met with from some gentlemen in Virginia," and a letter was sent to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland asking money to help maintain itinerant ministers in Virginia and requesting the Assembly to pressure the English government to direct the Virginia government to refrain from such "illegal prosecutions."[2] The outcome of this letter is unknown, and after this incident, missionary journeys to Virginia seem to have been terminated.

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 257.

[2] Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 19 and 22 September, 1719, and 22, 23 September 1720, Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 56-59. This Potomoke in Virginia has never been located. Because 1719 was too early for settlement in the Shenandoah Valley, Brydon postulates that it was on Potomac Creek in present Stafford County, near the King George County line, for Presbyterians are known to have been in the area at that time. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 256-257. It is also possible that "Potomoke" is a misspelling of Pokomoke or Pocomoke on the Eastern Shore near where Makemie had worked, rather than a misspelling of Potomac.

[3] *Ibid.*, I, 258.

Simultaneous with the efforts of these few struggling Presbyterian congregations to establish themselves in Virginia where the government was willing to tolerate them but some of the citizens were overtly hostile, two other groups of foreign dissenters settled in Virginia. The circumstances of their arrival and the religious toleration offered them differ only slightly from the pattern previously established for the Huguenots, so we shall consider them briefly, merely as further proof that the Virginia government was perfectly willing to permit a controlled amount of religious diversity and deviation from the established church.

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[1] Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 25 September 1722, 20 September 1723, 17 September 1724, in Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 72, 74, 77.

[2] Ibid., 22 September 1733, p. 103.

German Protestants first came to Virginia in 1714 as the result of Governor Spottswood's desire to develop a mining industry on his lands. Through the efforts of the Count de Graffenreid he obtained the services of forty-two miners from Nassau-Siegen who happened to be members of the Reformed church. These he settled at Germanna in present Spotsylvania County on the frontier, in houses he built for them and protected by a fort built and supplied by the Council.[1]

Provisions made by the General Assembly for the religious life of these Germans were presumably modeled on those for the Huguenots. Germanna and the land five miles around were set aside as the Parish of St. George, separate from the surrounding St. Mary's Parish, Essex County. The seven year exemption from parish levies given the Huguenots was repeated here with the additional generous gesture that subsequent foreign protestants coming to Germanna would be free from levies for seven years from their arrival. They were not required to pay their minister the 16,000 pounds tobacco required for parish ministers until there were 400 titheables in the parish.[1] Thus, these Germans were encompassed in the parochial structure of the established church without being forced to conform with Anglican canons. Nor, on the other hand, was an effort made to register them as dissenters under the toleration act.

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[1] William J. Hinke, "The First German Reformed Colony in Virginia: 1714-1750," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, II (June 1903), pp. 1-5, 13-17; John B. Wayland, Germanna: Outpost of Adventure, 1714-1956. Published by the Memorial Foundation of the Germanna colonies in Virginia, Inc., (Staunton, Va.: The McClure Printing Company, 1956), p. 10.

Between 1717 and 1720 two groups of German Lutherans joined the Reformed settlers at Germanna, and as they brought no minister with them, participated in the Reformed services of St. George's parish.[2] As early as 1718 when their term of service to Spottswood was over, some of the Reformed group began to move from Germanna to lands they had purchased in present Fauquier County.[3] The Lutherans were no happier than the Reformed group at Germanna, and in 1724 they moved to the base of the Blue Ridge in present Madison County. There they built a chapel and secured a minister from Philadelphia. In 1734 this congregation sent their minister and two parishioners to Europe, armed with testimonial letters from the Spotsylvania county court and from Governor Gooch, in order to collect funds for a new church and secure an assistant to their minister.[1] The successful establishment and functioning of these two German congregations was due not merely to their own efforts, but to the cooperation and encouragement they received from the local and colonial governments and from the established church.

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[1] Hinke, "First German Reformed Colony in Virginia" (September 1903 continued), pp. 99-100. At the time the Burgesses passed this law they noted that they would welcome other German Protestants coming to Virginia.

[2] W. P. Huddle, History of Hebron Lutheran Church, Madison County, Virginia from 1717 to 1907 (New Market, Va.: Henkel & Co., 1908), pp. 3-5.

[3] W. B. Hackley, "The Original Survey of German Town," The Germanna Record, No. 2 (April 1962), pp. 6-7.

By 1740, after a century and a quarter of the colonial experiment, the Virginians had developed a religious pattern quite suitable to their way of life in the New World. As loyal Englishmen, the great majority were firmly attached to the Church of England, but because of administrative difficulties inherent in having no bishop in Virginia, the colonists altered that church radically by developing a pattern of congregational control through vestries. These vestries combined civil functions with religious, making them a necessary local arm of the colonial government. The civil war had served as an agent of homogeneity for the Virginia church, because the Puritan element in the colony emigrated then when Virginia remained loyal to the crown.

The authority of the established church as the spiritual mentor for all Virginians was not seriously questioned in the seventeenth century. Dissenters had been slow to come to Virginia as long as their rights were not recognized by the government. The chief exception to this was the Quakers who gained converts in spite of legislation enacted to hamper their organization, but not in numbers large enough to pose a threat to the church, and at the end of the century those laws were repealed. Presbyterian ministers came into the colony at the close of the century to minister to coreligionists who had settled there, but they made no effort to draw converts from the church. Largely as a result of their request the governor and council pronounced that the provisions of the toleration act in England would be applied in Virginia, and these Presbyterian groups registered themselves and their meeting places as legal dissenters.

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[1] Huddle, Hebron Church, pp. 14, 17, 20-30. By 1734 the colony had about 300 inhabitants who purchased their minister a 193 acre glebe, built him a house, and paid him 3000 pounds tobacco annually.

The early years of the eighteenth century saw the Virginians welcome two groups of foreign protestant dissenters and make very agreeable arrangements for their religious practices. Both the government settled on the frontier with native ministers and separate parishes. Neither group posed any threat to the balance of church-state relations in Virginia for they were small and isolated. One, the Huguenots, became merely French-speaking members of the Church of England and in time dropped even their language peculiarity; the other, which soon separated into Reformed and Lutheran congreations, retained their familiar liturgy as well as native tongue, but within parochial arrangements of the established church.

The average Virginia planter, churchman, local official, or burgess of 1730 could not possibly have imagined that by 1750 this secure supremacy and possibly smug self-satisfaction of his church would have been boldly challenged on two fronts that would require a re-evaluation of the entire concept of church-state relations developed in the preceding 150 years. A particularly thoughtful Virginian might have wondered what would happen if the style of preaching, its theological content, the forms of the liturgy, the personal attributes of the ministers, and the morals of the people were seriously questioned or criticized. Were there grounds for attacking the practices of the church? Could the church continue to hold the allegiance of the masses under an attack? Few, if any, Virginians were asking such questions prior to the middle of the century.

And what about the apparently liberal policy adopted by the government in Williamsburg toward the groups of foreign protestant dissenters who came to the colony?--small and scattered as they were at frontier outposts they posed no apparent challenge to the unity and homogeneity of Virginia life. But Englishmen were quickly moving west in the 1730's and settling in the Piedmont; the frontier outposts of 1715 were not so far away by 1730. The precedent for accepting settlements of dissenters on the frontiers had been set, and easily so when there were only about a thousand of them in 1730. What would happen, however, if thousands more wanted to come and settle and bring their different religious forms with them?

II. INNOVATION IN VIRGINIA RELIGIOUS LIFE: PRESBYTERIANISM AND EVANGELISM CHALLENGE THE ESTABLISHMENT

For over a century before 1740 there had been no serious challenge to the almost exclusive claim the established church had on the spiritual loyalty of the vast majority of Virginia's citizens. Although examples of dissent occurred in the colony and were tolerated, they represented such a small and scattered proportion of the population that they not only posed no threat to the established church, but also had not been significant enough to cause the governor, council, or assembly to formulate a general plan for dealing with dissenting denominations.

The highly restrictive Carolingian anti-dissent statutes had never been placed on the Virginia statute books for they were passed in England after the colony was founded. Instead, the Virginia assembly had passed its own laws forbidding or regulating the practice of dissent and strengthening the official position of the established church as the occasion arose between 1650 and 1699. Restrictive legislation against dissenters, particularly Quakers, was dropped after 1689, the year of the passage of the so-called English Toleration Act, although laws to enforce stricter adherence to the established church continued to be passed.

The English Toleration Act, whose true title was "an act for exempting their majesties Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws," was expressed negatively as a relief from repressive laws rather than positively as a grant of toleration. All of the measures adopted against protestant dissenters after the Restoration remained on the statute books; this act merely eliminated the penalties attached to those laws, provided the said dissenters complied with certain requirements. Basically the act provided that (1) those who took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and declared against transubstantiation were not subject to penalties for non-attendance at church and attendance at conventicles; (2) dissenting ministers who complied with the above and in addition subscribed to thirty-five of the thirty-nine Articles of Religion could not be penalized by the Act of Uniformity, the Five Mile Act, and the Conventicle Act; (3) Baptists need not express belief in infant baptism, and Quakers need only declare allegiance, belief in the Trinity, and in the divine inspiration of the Bible. These broad measures were further defined by certain limitations on the practice of dissent, including the requirements that each dissenting minister must record in court the places he intended to hold services, and that the doors of the dissenting meeting houses must never be locked.[1]

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[1] Mark A. Thomson, A Constitutional History of England, 1642-1801 (London: Methuen & Co., 1938), pp. 270-272; Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 372.

The Virginia General Assembly was under no obligation to accept this act into the body of Virginia laws, but the measure nonetheless found its way in rather confusing fashion into Virginia law, where it served as a point of debate and question for both dissenters and churchmen alike until the Revolution. The act was first placed into effect by order of the Council on 15 January 1690/91, and again in March 1690/91, in each case only in reference to Quakers.[1] These two Council orders, when combined with another of that year on 15 May 1691, sponsored by the ardent Anglican, Governor Francis Nicholson, causing vestries to remove any minister not conforming to canons of the Church of England, indicate that the Council, at least, had developed a policy to tighten conformity with the church and to set guidelines for dissent.[2] As a result of these three orders, we have the first examples of the registering of dissenting meeting houses and ministers in Virginia. The first Presbyterian to qualify under the English Toleration Act provisions was the Reverend Josias Mackie, the dismissed minister of Elizabeth River Parish, who in 1692 and 1693 qualified as dissenting minister to the registered congregations on the Elizabeth River in Norfolk County and the Lynnhaven River in Princess Anne County.[3]

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[1] McIlwaine, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, 15 January 1690/91, March 1690/91, I, 161, 167.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 255.

[3] Ibid., I, 269n.

It was not until 1699, during Nicholson's second term as governor, that the House of Burgesses moved to place the question of dissent under some legislative arrangement. In April 1699 the Presbyterian minister, Francis Makemie appeared before the Virginia Council to request a proclamation of liberty of conscience agreeable with English laws and was told by Nicholson that all dissenters "shall have such Liberty allowed them as the Law directs."[1] At that time, however, no Virginia law directed liberty for dissenters, and the English act had only been accepted insofar as the Council had proclaimed it eight years earlier. A few days after this statement Nicholson presented his royal instructions dated September 1698 to the House of Burgesses, and an item requesting a law to suppress drunkenness, debauchery, swearing, and blasphemy gave the assembly an opportunity to legislate on dissent. The requested bill was prepared, and provisions regarding the non-attendance at parish churches were added on the floor. After conference with the Council on amendments, the "Act for more effectuall suppressing of Blasphemy, Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness and Sabbathbreaking" was adopted on 30 May 1699.[2]

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[1] McIlwaine, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, 24 April 1699, I, 427.

[2] H. R. McIlwaine and J. P. Kennedy (eds.), Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1777, 13 vols. (Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1905-1915), 8 May, 15-18 May, 25-30 May 1699, pp. 147, 163-166, 178-183.

This Virginia statute differed somewhat in content and intent from the English Toleration Act, for it was primarily a law to enforce stricter adherence to the established church. One of its provisions fined any adult who failed to attend his parish church at least once in two months without good excuse. The law provided an important exception to this fine.

> Provided always that any person or persons dissenting from the Church of England being every way Qualified according to one act of parliament made in the first year of the reigne of our sovereigne lord the king that now is, and the late queen Mary of blessed memory, entituled an act for exempting their majesties protestant subjects dissenting from the church of England from the penaltyes of certaine laws, shall resort and meet at any congregation or place of religious worship permitted and allowed by the said act of Parliament once in two months that then the said penaltyes and forfeitures imposed by the act for neglecting or refuseing to resort to their parrish church or chappel as aforesaid shall not be taken to extend to such person or persons, any thing in this act to the contrary notwithstanding.[1]

The inclusion of this provision for dissenting worship makes it clear that the governor and assembly accepted current thinking in the mother country about the acceptance of dissent. This was not difficult to do in 1699 when there may not have been more than a thousand dissenters in Virginia scattered in the few weak Presbyterian congregations on the Eastern Shore and around Norfolk, and in the Quaker groups which had persisted for about thirty years. The fact that the assembly did not bother to stipulate its own standards for recognition of dissenting ministers and congregations but threw the qualification back to the parliamentary act may indicate that the colony's leaders did not see wide-scale dissent as a problem to be reckoned with, and chose to recognize its existence in a rather casual way.

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[1] Hening, Statutes, II, 171.

The council exerted a concerted effort just after the passage of this act to determine the extent of dissent in Virginia, for it ordered all county courts to return "an exact account" of what meetings were held by dissenters in their counties, how the meetings and preachers were licensed, and what sort of people attended. The replies must have upset Nicholson and indicated that the council orders of 1691 and the Sabbath-breaking act of 1699 were not being taken seriously, for in December 1699 the governor signed a proclamation particularly enjoining observation of the English act to exempt dissenters from the penalties of certain laws.[1]

If the law regarding dissenters was not being observed six months after its passage, it seems that the local and colonial governments were not dealing effectively with the small amount of dissent then existing, and would have further trouble if the number of dissenters were to increase significantly. With little warning that increase occurred in the 1730's and the government and the church were forced to develop a policy to delineate relations with two significant and vociferous dissenting groups, both Presbyterian.

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[1] McIlwaine, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, 16 November 1699, 20 December 1699, I, 27, 37.

The first and apparently less troublesome group of Presbyterians to appear in Virginia, the Scots-Irish, played an important role in the history of that ethnic group in America.[1] The first wave of migration from Ulster to the middle colonies began in 1717 as a result of severe drought and a variety of deep-rooted economic difficulties. Ulstermen in the second wave of migration in 1725-1729 found the best Pennsylvania lands already taken up by the time their four to seven year indentures as servants expired, and turned their sights south about 1730, just as Governor William Gooch of Virginia instituted a new policy of granting large tracts of land in the Shenandoah Valley. Most of the Scots-Irish coming to Virginia took lands on either the 1736 grant to William Beverley of Essex County of 118,491 acres in present Rockingham and Augusta Counties near the towns of Staunton and Harrisonburg, or the 500,000 acre grant in southern Augusta and present Botetourt County near Roanoke and most of present Rockbridge County near

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[1] The best work on this subject is James G. Leyburn's The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962) in which he demonstrates that these people differed from the Scots in that the absence of feudalism in Ulster produced a society based on the individual's abilities rather than on family and status, and that the quality of their Presbyterianism differed in its strong puritanism and conservatism from that of Scotland. These traits they brought to America, pp. 140-143.

Lexington to Benjamin Borden of New Jersey, an agent of Lord Fairfax.[1]

These sturdy Scots-Irish pioneers were quick to establish congregations and call for ministers. At the same time the Quakers were founding Hopewell Meeting near Winchester, their Presbyterian neighbors on Opecquon Creek built a meeting house and called the Reverend Samuel Gelston from Maryland as their minister.[2] About the same time (1736) William Williams, an elder from New Castle Presbytery, took an oath in Orange County Court[3] as a dissenting preacher for two meeting houses later known as Tuscarora and Bullskin, in present Berkeley

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[1] The 1699 Woolens Act which prohibited exportation of Irish wool except to England and Wales crippled that growing industry. Although the linen industry was also developing, it was subject to periods of depression. The introduction of rack-renting in the second decade of the eighteenth century sent thousands of landless Ulstermen to America in search of cheap farm land. In addition, the application of the 1703 Test Act, designed to keep Catholics from office, also deprived many prominent Ulster Presbyterians of their chance to hold office, and removed many of their ministers from the pulpit. Ibid., pp. 157-168; 176-183, 203-204.

[2] Records of Donegal Presbytery, 1736: "Mr. Gelston is appointed to pay a visit to some new inhabitants near Opeckon, in Virginia, who have been writing to Mr. Gelston, and, when he was over the river, desired a visit of this kind; and he is to spend some time in preaching to said new inhabitants according to discretion." Quoted in W. H. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, Second Series (2d ed. revised, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1856), p. 21.

[3] At this time Orange County, founded 1734, encompassed the entire area of western Virginia below the Rappahannock River. Out of it in the next decade were taken Augusta (1745), Frederick (1743), and Culpeper (1749).

County, West Virginia.[1] The following year the first settlers on Beverley Manor requested ministerial supplies from Donegal Presbytery in Pennsylvania. On 2 September 1737 the Presbytery judged it "not expedient for several reasons to supply them this winter; but order Mr. Anderson to write an encouraging letter to the people to signify that the Presbytery resolves, if it be in their power, to grant their request next spring."[2]

In 1738 John Caldwell, a member of the Reverend John Thomson's congregation at Chestnut Level, Pennsylvania, determined to move to Virginia along with numerous other Presbyterian families. Wishing to take no chances with his right to worship, Caldwell applied to the synod in behalf of the group, asking the synod to procure a statement from the governor of Virginia to guarantee Presbyterians the right to worship. John-Thomson, Jonathan Dickinson, and Ebenezer Pemberton prepared the address to the governor, stressing the Presbyterians' record of loyalty to the Crown, and the synod selected four men, three of whom had been missionaries to Virginia Presbyterian congregations in the preceding decade, to carry the message to Williamsburg.[3] Of the four, only James Anderson was able to make the journey. His mission was a major success for Anderson not only secured a favorable reply from Gooch to the synodical address,[1] but he also visited the scattered groups of Presbyterians who had already settled in the colony.[2]

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[1] Robert F. Scott, "Colonial Presbyterianism in the Valley of Virginia, 1727-1755," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, XXXV (June 1957), p. 73.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 27. The Anderson mentioned is James Anderson, who in his youth had been a missionary to Tidewater Virginia.

[3] "To the honourable William Gooch, Esquire, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Virginia, the humble address of the Presbyterian ministers convened in Synod, May 28, 1738, &c. May

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it please your honour, we take leave to address you in behalf of a considerable number of our brethren who are meditating a settlement in the remote parts of your government, and are of the same persuasion with the Church of Scotland. We thought it our duty to acquaint your honour with their design, and to ask your favour in allowing them the liberty of their consciences, and of worshipping God in a way agreeable to the principles of their education. Your honour is sensible that those of our profession in Europe have been remarkable for their inviolable attachment to the Protestant succession, in the illustrious house of Hanover, and have upon all occasions manifested an unspotted fidelity to our gracious sovereign King George, and we doubt not but these our brethren will carry the same loyal principles to the most distant settlements where their lot may be cast, which will ever influence them to the most dutiful submission to the government which is placed over them. This we trust will recommend them to your honour's countenance and protection, and merit the free enjoyment of their civil and religious liberties. We pray for the Divine blessing upon your person and government, and beg leave to subscribe ourselves your honour's most humble and obedient servants." Minutes of Synod, 30 May 1738, 26 May 1738, Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 138, 140.

[1] Gooch's reply to the Synod: "Sir: By the hands of Mr. Anderson I have received an address signed by you, in the name of your brethren of the Synod of Philadelphia. And as I have been always inclined to favour the people who have lately removed from other provinces, to settle on the western side of our great mountains; so you may be assured, that no interruption shall be given to any minister of your profession who shall come among them, so as they conform themselves to the rules prescribed by the act of toleration in England, by taking the oaths enjoined thereby, and registering the places of their meeting, and behave themselves peaceable towards the government. This you may please to communicate to the Synod as an answer of theirs. Your most humble servant, William Gooch. Williamsburg, November 4th, 1738." Minutes of Synod, 28 September 1739, Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, p. 145.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 118.

With protection of their worship guaranteed, the Presbyterians embarked on an energetic program of ministerial visits to Virginia, chiefly under the auspices of Donegal Presbytery. In 1739 the presbytery appointed John Craig and John Thomson to preach to various of the Presbyterian societies in Virginia. In June 1740 Craig accepted a call from the inhabitants of Shenandoah and the South River and became the first settled Presbyterian minister in the valley. He managed two congregations in the area, one which became Augusta Stone Church near Staunton, and the other known as Tinkling Spring.[1]

Another important congregation, Timber Ridge, near Lexington, was established about the same time to the south in present Rockbridge County. Although these settlers were Scots-Irish also, they tended to side with the New Light movement developing in the church, and received their ministerial supplies from the Presbyteries of New Castle, New Brunswick, and New York, rather than from the conservative Donegal Presbytery.[2]

Although it had been the original intention of the Scots-Irish and of Gooch that the newcomers remain west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, by 1740 there were several large settlements in the Piedmont in present Albemarle County, and in southside Virginia in present Prince Edward and Charlotte counties. John Caldwell, who instigated the guarantee of toleration from Governor Gooch, was a leading figure in this movement, along with the Reverend John Thomson. The first settlement in Charlotte County, which was then part of Brunswick, was a section of about five square miles intersected by Wallace, Cub, and Turnip Creeks, and bounded on the south by the Staunton River. To this area, known as the Cub Creek settlement, John Caldwell led about two hundred Scots-Irish between 1738 and 1741.[1]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 27-28. The Tinkling Spring congregation has been exhaustively studied in a very fine work by a former pastor of the church, Howard McKnight Wilson, The Tinkling Spring: Headwaters of Freedom, 1732-1952 (Richmond: Garret and Massie, 1954).

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 94.

Shortly after the founding of Cub Creek another large company of Scots-Irish settled along the Buffalo River in Amelia County (now Prince Edward). Although Caldwell is usually given credit for establishing this group also, the most outstanding resident of the community was John Thomson.[1] He was, in fact, one of the most capable men living in the colony in the 1740's. From his arrival from Ireland in 1715 Thomson assumed leadership in the Presbyterian church, serving several times as moderator of presbytery and synod, helping establish an endowment, and presenting the overture calling for acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith by all ministers. This became the famous Adopting Act of 1729 which, along with the Directory of Worship, contains the essence of American Presbyterianism. In 1734 Benjamin Franklin published Thomson's book of advice to his children called Poor Orphan's Legacy. In 1741 Thomson published two important works directed against the revivalist movement then beginning in the church: Doctrine of Conviction Set in a Clear Light and The Government of the Church of Christ.[2] After 1739 Thomson seems to have spent much of his time in Virginia, and in 1744 he finally obtained a release from his pastorate at Chestnut Level, Pennsylvania, and moved to the Buffalo settlement in Amelia County where he purchased 386 acres.

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[1] Historians do not agree on the actual date of settlement of Cub Creek. Wilson in Tinkling Spring, p. 82, believes that Caldwell originally settled northeast of Wood's Gap in presend Albemarle County, near the settlement founded by Michael Woods on Mechum's River in 1734, and that Caldwell did not move to Cub Creek until 1741 or 1742. It is true that the deeds for the Cub Creek area were not filed in Brunswick County prior to 1740, but it was not unusual for settlers to clear the land and build houses before obtaining a patent. Elizabeth V. Gaines, Cub Creek Church and Congregation (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1931), p. 10. No one disputes the fact that Caldwell established the colony, and if James Anderson preached there in 1738 and John Thomson in 1739, then Caldwell surely had settled there by then. Joseph D. Eggleston, "Buffaloe Settlement and Its Makers, with an Account of some of Their Descendants," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XLIX (July 1941), pp. 234-235. By 1741 Caldwell and his friends were well established in the area for the Brunswick Court ordered them to join in cutting a road.

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[1] Eggleston, in "Buffaloe Settlement . . . ," pp. 234-235 contends that Thomson himself founded Buffaloe, although he admits to having no proof of this. Thomson's biographer, John G. Herndon in "The Reverend John Thomson," Journal of Presbyterian History, XXI (March 1943), pp. 34-35 indicates that Thomson chose Buffalo because so many friends and relatives from his congregation at Chestnut Level had already moved there.

[2] Herndon, "The Rev. John Thomson," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, XX (December 1942), pp. 119-154.

In 1747 Donegal Presbytery appointed him to a committee of three to supervise the needs of the Virginia congregations belonging to that presbytery.[1] In June 1749 William Parks in Williamsburg published Thomson's most remarkable work, An Explanation of the Shorter Catechism, dedicated to the children of Presbyterian dissenters in Virginia.[2]

Most of the early settlers at Buffalo and Cub Creek patented sizable land holdings, which, although much smaller than the great tidewater plantations, were nonetheless far larger than the farms of their countrymen in Augusta County.[3] The chief products of their farms were wheat, corn, cattle, and tobacco. The large patents and the cultivation of tobacco are significant, for they indicate that these Scots-Irish were participating in a type of agriculture typical of the tidewater, and while they were lined with the valley settlers by ties of kinship and religion, their economic ties lay eastward. At a time when river transportation was paramount, the Cub Creek and Buffalo settlers would find their markets down the rivers--the Staunton flows into the Roanoke which empties into Albemarle Sound in North Carolina, and the Buffalo is a tributary of the Appomattox, which empties into the James. In addition, the Scots-Irish moved into this area at precisely the time English settlers from the tidewater were moving westward seeking new lands.[1] Here for the first time in Virginia, a large population of dissenters would mix with the Anglicans in contrast to the usual pattern of a very small group of dissenters living among Anglicans, or a larger group of dissenters placed in isolation from the established church on the frontier.

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[1] Herbert Bradshaw, The History of Prince Edward County (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1954), pp. 15-16.

[2] After completing his excellent study of the Presbyterian catechism, Thomson appended a discussion of the Articles of Religion of the Church of England. He reduced them to catechetical form and demonstrated the complete absence of theological difference between Presbyterianism and Anglicanism. Herndon, "The Rev. John Thomson," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, XXI, 41-42.

[3] Some examples of land holdings at Buffalo include Caleb Baker's 1400 acres in 1742-43; Douglas Baker, 1415 acres in 1740; Robert Baker, Jr., 400 acres in 1746. Joseph D. Eggleston, "The Buffaloe Settlement and Its Makers: The Baker Family," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XLIX (October 1941), pp. 313-314, 317-318, 320. At the Cub Creek settlement the largest land grants included deeds in 1745 to John Caldwell for 1400 acres, to David Logan for 1,632 acres, and to Israel Pickings for 1,643 acres. Sales made to 32 Cub Creek settlers for 16,138 acres between 1745 and 1749 mean that the average landholdings was over 500 acres. Gaines, Cub Creek Church, p. 95. These are larger than the holdings indicated on the excellent map for the Tinkling Spring congregation in Augusta in Wilson, The Tinkling Spring.

The Scots-Irish presented no serious immediate religious problem to the Virginia government, for they did not challenge the position of the established church in any way initially. The majority of them were settling beyond the mountains where few families from the tidewater had yet moved. It was an area that the governor and council wanted to see settled, and Gooch was happy to guarantee that their ministers would not be molested as long as they conformed to the provisions for qualification stated in the English Toleration Act. The Presbyterians, on their part, found this requirement entirely reasonable at the time. The threat to the church posed by these Scots-Irish was only a potential one in 1740 and was largely ignored by those leaders of the colony eager to expand westward. If they had wished to guarantee the supremacy of the established church in the colony, they should have asked themselves what would happen if so many Scots-Irish settled in the west that they outnumbered the churchmen and assumed the political, social, economic, and religious leadership of the vast western expanse of Virginia. On the other hand, perhaps those in power fully understood this possibility and either considered the settlement of the west more important than the position of the church, or else felt the church was too strong to be shaken.

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[1] The rapid growth of this area is attested by the fact that between 1746 and 1754 the General Assembly created five new counties out of Brunswick and Amelia: Lunenburg (1746), Halifax (1752), Dinwiddie (1752), Bedford (1754), and Prince Edward (1754). Robinson, "Virginia Counties," p. 165.

The second, and far more troublesome group of Presbyterians in Virginia developed in the late appearance in that colony of the most powerful religious movement which had swept the Anglo-Saxon world since the Protestant Reformation--the Great Awakening or Evangelical Revival. In England of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Latitudinarian ideas of churchmen such as Tillotson that "the essential content of the Christian evangel was epitomized in the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God and the duty of benevolence in Man"[1] had appealed to a nation weary of the theological strife of the preceding century. But this too, provoked its reaction, and in the revival movement, pious men objected to what they considered the spiritual deadness represented by this Latitudinarianism.

In England, the attack on spiritual deadness began with the development of devotional-study groups of young men. By 1710 there were forty-two of these in the London area alone, and it was through such groups that the Wesleys and George Whitefield launched their revival. Moravian preachers from the community at Herrenhut, Saxony, who entered England in 1735 were simultaneously arousing followers in all parts of the country.[2]

In America, as in Europe, the Great Awakening occurred in several places within a brief period. It first appeared in New Brunswick, New Jersey, where Theodorus Jacobus Freylinghuysen transformed the preaching and discipline of his Dutch Reformed Church about 1729. Freylinghuysen influenced Gilbert Tennent, a young Presbyterian minister in New Brunswick, and under the Dutchman's guidance, Tennent put into practice the evangelical Puritan theology which he and his brothers John and William, Jr. learned from their father, the Reverend William Tennent of Neshaminy, Pennsylvania. The four Tennents, preaching that a conviction of the necessity of salvation is essential for the true believer, held revivals in each of their congregations. In 1735 William Tennent, Sr. founded a school at Neshaminy for the training of much-needed ministers which became the famous Log College. In 1738 the Synod of Philadelphia created the New Brunswick Presbytery, all six of whose members were revivalists, and whose territory included some fifty preaching stations between the Delaware Water Gap and Cape May.[1]

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[1] Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century. The Birkback Lectures in Ecclesiastical History, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1931-1933 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1962), pp. 257-258.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 141-144.

The New England phase of the Great Awakening is generally thought to have begun with the preaching of Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, Massachusetts about the same time as the Tennent group began their work. Conservative clergymen such as Boston's Charles Chauncey looked with horror on the emotional reaction Edwards evoked by sermons such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741), and the methods and results of the revival fairly rent the Congregational churches. The Awakening in New England affected not only the dominant Puritan church, but also the Baptists, and the repercussions of the revival in both denominations had considerable social, political, and religious significance in the development of American society.[1]

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[1] Trinterud, Forming of an American Tradition, pp. 54-55, 57-59, 63-64, 73-74.

Although this vital movement was late in coming to Virginia, the Great Awakening appeared in the colony by two unconnected channels within one year. George Whitefield, the great revivalist, was warmly received in Virginia in December 1739. He dined with Governor Gooch and visited Commissary Blair who "received me with joy, asked me to preach, and wished my stay was to be longer."[2] Of Whitefield's sermon in Bruton Parish Church the Virginia Gazette commented that "His extraordinary Manner of Preaching, gains him the Admiration and Applause of most of his Hearers."[3] Several gentlemen from Yorktown arrived to ask Whitefield to preach there, but he had to move south.

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[1] In spite of the importance of the Great Awakening in the development of religion in America, few good studies have been published. Two excellent recent works on the Awakening in New England are Edwin Gaustad, The Great Awakening in New England (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957), and C. C. Goen, Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962). Trinterud's Forming of an American Tradition includes an excellent study of the revival in the Pennsylvania-Delaware area among Presbyterians, and an older study, C. H. Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1920) is also useful. In the south, Wesley Gewehr's The Great Awakening in Virginia (Durham: Duke University Press, 1932) is a standard work.

[2] A Continuation of the Reverend Mr. Whitefield's Journal From His Embarking after the EMBARGO to His Arrival at Savannah in Georgia (August 1739-January, 1740). Entry for Saturday, December 15, 1739 in George Whitefield's Journals (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), pp. 371-372.

[3] (Parks) Virginia Gazette, 21 December 1739.

Whitefield made two important observations on Virginia religious life in his diary. Upon leaving Williamsburg he wrote, "I could not but think, that God intended, in His own time, to work a good work in these southern parts of America. At present they seem more dead to God, but far less prejudiced than in the northern parts." Later, in reflecting on religious conditions in both Maryland and Virginia, he noted,

> In Virginia, there are no Dissenters from the Established Church, except one or two meetings of Quakers. The importation of so many Negroes and convicts is one great reason why there is so little religion to be seen; but the main cause of irreligion, both in Virginia and Maryland, I take to be their not incorporating into towns: for hereby people living at a distance from the church, are apt to make every little thing serve as an excuse to keep them from public worship. . . . The greatest probability of doing good in Virginia is among the Scots-Irish, who have lately settled in the mountainous parts of that province.[1]

The "good work in these southern parts" which Whitefield expected was, unbeknownst to him, occurring just then about sixty miles from Williamsburg in Hanover County. There a group of ordinary small planters became extraordinarily dissatisfied with the spiritual guidance they received at their parish church, and began to meet independently to read religious works.[2]

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[1] George Whitefield's Journals, Sunday, December 16, 1739, pp. 372, 388-389. William Parks, printer of the Gazette, asked Whitefield for sermons to print, and the evangelist obliged by supplying Parks with copies of his Sermons and Journals. Parks advertised pamphlet copies of some sermons in 1740, and they were apparently popular.

[2] The most detailed modern study of the Hanover Revival is found in Robert Leland Bidwell, "The Morris Reading Houses:

Information about the origin of this group of dissenters is sketchy, and tends toward romanticization. According to one account, four men became convinced that the parish church gave them little spiritual comfort, and absented themselves simultaneously from services. This truancy resulted in fines from county officials; nonetheless, the men decided to meet at each other's homes on Sundays with their families, to pray, read Scriptures, and read Luther on the Galatians.[1] Another version indicates that someone received a part of Thomas Boston's Human Nature in Its Fourfold State from a Scottish woman, and was deeply impressed. Another gentleman acquired Luther on the Galatians and became similarly impressed with the need for salvation, and through their collaboration the group began.[2]

A Study in Dissent" (unpublished Master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 1948). The chief sources for the story of this spontaneous revival are Samuel Morris' account to Samuel Davies in The State of Religion among the Protestant Dissenters in Virginia; in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Joseph Bellamy (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1751); Davies' account to Phillip Doddridge, 2 October 1750, printed in Perry, Historical Collections, I, 368-371; a letter from Davies to the Bishop of London, 10 January, 1752, printed in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 180-211; an account by the Rev. James Hunt, whose father participated in the revival, printed in the Literary and Evangelical Magazine, II (Richmond, 1819), pp. 346-353.

[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 123 (Hunt narrative). It seems more than coincidental that this revival occurred in Hanover County the same year that Quakers in that county experienced a revival under the preaching of Joseph Newman. Brown, "Cedar Creek Monthly Meeting and Its Meeting House," p. 295. It seems possible that Morris and his friends, who knew of the Quakers, may have attended Newman's preaching or at least discussed it with their Quaker neighbors.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 120.

The man who emerged as leader of this small band was a bricklayer named Samuel Morris. About ten years after the revival began, Morris recorded his version of its early years for Samuel Davies, who then publicized the event among his colleagues in America and England. The revival probably began in 1739 for Morris reported that the group knew of Whitefield, and if they had received sufficient notice of his visit to Williamsburg, they would have journeyed there to hear him.[1] They seem to have been unaware that William Parks was selling Whitefield's sermons in the capital, for Morris notes the joy with which they received a volume of his sermons from a young Scot in 1743.

Originally the group met at Morris' home and perhaps at others, but as more people attended the meetings, it became necessary to construct a separate building on Morris' property, which was called the Morris Reading House. Similar houses were erected in other parts of Hanover and adjacent counties although we do not know the precise date of their completion. Morris travelled to these various locations to read sermons.[2]

By 1743 the group had encountered difficulties from county officials for their non-attendance at the parish church, and were summoned to court presumably to determine if they qualified as dissenters under the law. Morris records that they did not know what they were, save that they were not Quakers, but because they had read much of Luther, they called themselves Lutherans.[1] The Hunt narrative contains a very different version of the labelling of these dissenters as a denomination. According to him, his father and several other leaders of the group received a summons to appear before the governor and council to declare their creed. En route to Williamsburg one of them, travelling alone, found at the house where he spent the night, a book agreeing with his religious sentiments. The owner gave it to him, and the dissenters presented it to the governor as their creed. Gooch, a Scot himself, declared that they were Presbyterians when he saw that the volume was the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The governor then dismissed the group with an admonition not to disturb the peace.[2]

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[1] Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 10.

[2] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

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[1] Ibid., p. 11. It seems difficult to believe that the county court accepted this explanation for two reasons: (1) Lutheranism was primarily a national religion associated with the German and Scandinavian states, and these dissenters were well known in the county as former Anglicans; (2) the minister of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, had come to that post in 1737 from St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania County, the home of the German Lutherans in the colony, and he could surely have told any justice of the court that these people were not really Lutherans. We shall never know the official reaction of the court, for all Hanover County records of the eighteenth century were lost in a fire in Richmond in 1865.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 123-124. This is an incredible tale, especially when Hunt's accompanying comments are included. For example, "They were no longer considered as individual delinquents whose obstinacy might be sufficiently punished by the civil magistrate; but as a malignant cabal, that required the interposition of the executive." During the dissenters' meeting with the governor, "a violent thunder storm shaking the house and wrapping all in sheets of fire, had a

A turning point occurred for this unattached but firmly convinced band of dissenters in 1743 when they obtained their first ministerial supply. As a result of this man's labors, they committed themselves to the Presbyterian Church. The minister was William Robinson, a young man sent upon supplication as an evangelist by New Castle Presbytery in the winter of 1742-43 to the Scots-Irish in the Valley and in Amelia and Brunswick counties. Somehow the Hanover dissenters learned of Robinson's visit, and invited him to preach to them. Robinson came, and preached his first sermon on 6 July, then remained in Hanover four days, preaching and correcting doctrinal confusion among the group.[1]

Robinson probably left a volume or two of sermons with them and certainly suggested some to acquire, for prior to his arrival Morris only mentions Luther's Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and Whitefield's Sermons as the works which the group read at their meetings. However, by the time Samuel Davies arrived, their reading material included Thomas Boston (1676-1732) Human Nature in Its Fourfold State, of Primitive Integrity, Entire Deprivation, Begun Recovery, and Consummate Happiness OR Misery. . . ; Richard Baxter (1615-1691) The Saint's Everlasting Rest and A Call to Unconverted Sinners to

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softening influence on the minds of the Governor and Council, inclining them to deal gently with their fellow men."

[1] Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 13.

Turn and Live; Joseph Alleine (1634-1668) An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners: in a Serious Treatise on Conversion, and works of John Flavel (1630-1691) such as The Fountain of Life Opened. This list of works represented the thinking of English Puritans so admired by the Tennent group of revivalists among the Presbyterians to the north, and were surely brought to the Hanover people by the ministerial supplies sent to them between 1743 and 1747 by the Presbytery of New Brunswick.[1]

Until the appearance of the travelling Presbyterian evangelists such as William Robinson, who represented an emotional approach to religion altogether new to Virginia, the Anglican church in the colony managed to hold at least the nominal loyalty of the vast majority of Virginians. Those who had dissented had, until 1740, been small, isolated, peaceful groups with minimal influence. Suddenly, however, the colony was faced first with an influx of dissenters in the west whose growing numbers indicated that they would be powerful influences in that area, then with the movement of these Scots-Irish into the piedmont and southside. And finally, they brought with them ministers who not only cared for their own flock, but who also ministered to malcontents within the established church and brought them into the Presbyterian fold. Virginia was at last faced with the Great Awakening, and its force was out of control of the hands of the established church.

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[1] Bidwell, "The Morris Reading Houses," pp. 64-68.

In the two years following William Robinson's visit to the Hanover group, Virginia was highly favored by the revivalist presbyteries as a mission field, and the activities of these young evangelists disturbed certain of the colonial officials. In the summer of 1744 appeared John Blair, born in Ireland and educated at the classical school of his brother Samuel Blair, at Fagg's Manor, Pennsylvania, who had been ordained by the Presbytery of New Castle in December 1742.[1] Morris' narrative indicates that Blair held a considerable revival in Hanover, for he wrote that

> One night in particular a whole House-full of People was quite overcome with the Power of the Word, particularly of one pungent Sentence that dropt from his Lips; and they could hardly sit or stand, or keep their Passions under any proper Restraints, so general was the Concern during his Stay with us;[2]

Morris admitted that many who were convinced that night in a heat of passion became backsliders, but that many others were sincerely converted. Reports of this sensational meeting undoubtedly upset Anglican clergymen in the area.

A few months later another evangelist appeared in Hanover and caused an even greater furor. The new man, John Roan, was also from New Castle Presbytery, under whose care the Hanover dissenters had placed themselves. Roan, born in Ireland, had trained as a weaver before emigrating to America. Here he studied under William Tennent at the Log College, and taught at a grammar school near Neshaminy. The Presbytery of New Castle licensed Roan and in the winter of 1744-45 sent him on an extended tour of Virginia.[1] Numerous people in Hanover and surrounding counties asked Roan to speak, and his sermons had an effect similar to those of Blair. However, Roan went a step further and severely criticized the established church. In Samuel Morris' own words, Roan's revival meetings

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[1] Richard Webster, A History of the Presbyterian Church in America from its Origin until the Year 1750 with Biographical Sketches of its Early Ministers (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1857), pp. 486-487.

[2] Samuel Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 14.

> together with his speaking pretty freely about the Degeneracy of the Clergy in this Colony, gave a general Alarm, and some Measures were concerted to suppress us. To incense the Indignation of the Government the more, a perfidious Wretch deposed, he heard Mr. Roan, use some blasphemous Expressions in his Sermon, and speak in the most shocking & reproachful manner of the established Church.[2]

The blasphemous words were supposedly spoken at the home of Joshua Morris in James City County, where Roan preached on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of January.

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[1] William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations, III Presbyterians (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1858), p. 129; George H. Ingram, "Biographies of the Alumni of the Log College," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, XIII (September 1929), pp. 297-305.

[2] Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 15.

Roan's sermons were probably an echo of the denunciations pronounced by many New Light Presbyterians in Pennsylvania and New Jersey against conservative ministers of their own denomination, as exemplified by the fiery young Gilbert Tennent in his notorious sermon, "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." This censorious attitude adopted by the revivalist ministers against their brethren who disagreed with the new preaching style and the necessity of a definite conversion experience was in part responsible for the schism in the Presbyterian church.[1]

The use of denunciatory tactics could scarcely have been expected to be well received in Virginia where the clergy were in effect officials of the state. Word of Roan's activities soon reached Williamsburg and the new commissary, William Dawson.[2] When Roan preached at Joshua Morris' house in early January the capital no doubt buzzed with talk of such activities only a few miles from the town, and in the commissary's own parish. Dawson may have been warned of Roan's activities even earlier, for the Reverend Patrick Henry, rector of St. Paul's

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[1] Trinterud, The Forming of an American Tradition, p. 89.

[2] Commissary James Blair died in April 1743 at the age of 87. At the recommendation of Governor Gooch, the Bishop of London appointed Dawson the new commissary. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 256.

Parish, Hanover County, mentioned the evangelist to Dawson on his last visit to the capital, possibly in December.[1]

Dawson had received his MA from Queen's College, Oxford, in 1726 and remained as a fellow until 1729, at which time he was appointed a tutor at the College of William and Mary. He rose to professor of moral philosophy, served as chaplain to the General Assembly, and was minister of James City Parish. Immediately upon Blair's death, the board of visitors elected Dawson president of the college. He had married into the prominent Randolph family, and was a figure of no small importance in the colony.[2] However, Dawson had been in the office of commissary less than half a year when Roan appeared in the colony, and, feeling unsure of the best method of dealing with the evangelists and their followers, he sought legal advice.

Although he may have consulted with several attorneys, we have record of advice he received from only one. This is contained in a letter from a Williamsburg lawyer Benjamin Waller[3] dated 30 January 1744/45 in response to a letter he received from the commissary the previous day. Because Waller's advice is one of the clearest pieces of writing on the dissenter problem, it is worth examining in detail. On the subject of enthusiasm in general, Waller observes that

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[1] Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 13 February 1744/45. Virginia Dawson Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 256-257.

[3] Benjamin Waller (1716-1786) is an example of an ambitious young man who rose from the ranks of the yeomanry into the gentry under the sponsorship of the prominent Randolph family. He served as a Burgess from James City County 1744-1761, and was thus Dawson's own representative in the assembly. In addition, he was clerk of the General Court. Jack P. Greene, The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal

> Calm reason gentle Persuasion & good Example are the Ways most agreeable to the Gospel to reclaim a thinking Dissenter; but where too great a Delusion prevails & obstinacy presides, after Milder methods have been in vain attempted, a little rigor should be used, not so much to reclaim a perverse Enthusiastic . . . as to deter other unthinking Mortals, whose strongest Passion is often Fear. As these Simple Wretches . . . do not as I hear preach agst the Fundamentals of Religion, but only persuade People from frequenting the established Church, by despising & reviling it's Service, I think they come under those Laws.[1]

Waller then proceeded with an explanation of the legal devices available to deal with these disturbers of "the Peace & Unity of the Church." Itinerant preachers who have no orders or license "are liable to be bound to their good Behavior & treated as Vagabonds by a Justice of the Peace." He stated that according to the Toleration Act, dissenting ministers must appear at the local courts to take the required oaths and subscribe to the required articles before they may preach. By a revision of the act made in 10th Queen Anne, Waller seems to accept the fact that these men may preach in any county by producing credentials from the original county and taking the oaths.

Colonies, 1689-1776 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), pp. 24, 29.

[1] Benjamin Waller to William Dawson, 30 January 1744. Virginia Dawson Papers.

Waller explained that the followers of these preachers could be dealt with in two ways. They may be presented to the grand jury for non-attendance at church; or they may be liable for "depraving & despising the Common Prayer; as they surely do by telling People they will be damned if they go to Church & that they go there to serve the Devil." This latter offense was covered in an act of 1 Elizabeth Cap. 2 enacted before the colonization of Virginia, which Waller believed was not negated by the English Toleration Act, and was therefore in force in the colony. In either case, the procedure was either indictment by the grand jury, or presentation of a suit against the dissenters before the Attorney General, and those guilty would be fined.[1]

Portions of the remainder of the letter are missing, but extant parts indicate Dawson had inquired what authority he possessed to prosecute these disrupters in an ecclesiastical court, and Waller declined to answer. He closed by warning the commissary that the worldliness, materialism, and immorality of some of the clergy harm the church, and that the dissenters might be more easily persuaded by exemplary lives of the clergy than by severe measures "which they will call persecution for conscience."[2]

The Waller letter seems particularly important because it represents the opinion of a respected official and staunch churchman who clearly recognized and enumerated the rights of dissenters who obeyed the law, but who also wished to bring the force of law against those who flagrantly neglected their legal duties and sought to disrupt the established pattern of church-state relations. The letter should have reached Dawson in time to convince him that the Toleration Act and its amendment of 10 Queen Anne applied in the colony to sects newly formed as well as to older denominations.

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

Two weeks after he received Waller's letter, the commissary received another missive which seems to have been even more influential in determining his reaction to the New Lights, for he forwarded it to the Bishop of London as a description of the problems and disruptions caused by the enthusiasts in Virginia.[1] The writer was the Reverend Patrick Henry of St. Paul's Parish, to which most of the participants in the Hanover revival belonged before their conversion.

Henry opened his letter by apprizing Dawson of a new and unpleasant development among the revivalists in his parish. On Thursday, February 1, 1744/45 a Presbyterian minister, John Thomson,[2] arrived at the home of a gentleman in the parish, intending to preach at the new Presbyterian meeting house on Sunday the 4th. However, Thomson found the doors of the meeting house locked by the followers of the New Side who had received a letter from John Roan requesting that they not admit Thomson because he was an enemy to true religion.[1] This was probably the first open clash between the Old Side and New Side in Virginia, although such occurrences were common in the Great Awakening in the northern colonies.

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[1] Edmund, Bishop of London to William Dawson, 28 July 1745, Virginia Dawson Papers. "I thank you for y^{e} copy of Mr. Henry's account of the Methodists [sic] which is judiciously written. . . ."

[2] For an account of Thomson's activities see supra, pp. 48-49.

Henry, who had been a target of criticism among the revivalists in his parish as an unconverted minister, undoubtedly felt a sense of kinship with Thomson, and probably also realized Thomson could assist him in harming the dissenters' cause. He invited Thomson to the glebe where the Presbyterian divine gave him his version of the revival and its leaders. As a result of this conversation, Henry judged Thomson a man of great wisdom and piety, and was much impressed with his two published treatises against the New Side.[2]

Thomson presented the Tennent group as schismatics who illegally created their own discipline and ordained preachers with "almost no other qualification . . . than, what they call, experiences of a work of grace in their hearts,"[1] and that the ministers visiting Hanover were members of this separatist group. He then explained to Henry eleven doctrines of the New Side which differed from those of the Synod of Philadelphia. In summary these centered on the conversion experience which was a work of grace following a period of despair and contrition, and after which the convert is able to discern a converted from an unconverted minister; and may demand the right to hear any converted minister who can benefit him.[2]

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[1] Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 13 February 1744/45. Virginia Dawson Papers.

[2] These were The Docrtine of Conviction Set in a Clear Light (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1741), and The Government of the Church of Christ, and the Authority of Church Judicatories Established on a Scripture Foundation, and the Spirit of Rash Judging Arraigned and Condemned; or the Matter of Difference Between the Synod of Philadelphia and the Protesting Brethren Justly and Fairly Stated (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1741).

Henry concluded the presentation of evidence against the New Side with a description of the revival meetings held by Robinson, Blair, and Roan.

> These have been at great pains to vilifie the Clergy of this Colony. . . . These three . . . strive to will their might, to raise in their hearers, what they call convictions, which is thus performed. They thunder out manful words . . . exorting & teaching, calling the people . . . Lumps of hell fire, incarnate Devils, 1000 times worse than Devils &c. and all the while the Preacher exalts his voice puts himself into violent agitation . . . until the weaker sort of his hearers being scar'd, cry out, fall down & work like people in convulsion fits. . . . and these things are extolld by the Preachers as the mighty power of God's grace in their hearts. . . .[3]

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[1] This charge was untrue. Although a conversion experience was required, Minutes of the Presbytery of New Brunswick at this time (1741-44) indicate that candidates were examined on classical languages, philosophy, divinity, and were assigned an exegesis in Latin, a theological discourse, and a popular sermon before being licensed. Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, VII (September and December 1913; March 1914), passim.

[2] Henry to Dawson, 13 February 1744/45. Virginia Dawson Papers.

[3] Ibid.

Undoubtedly Henry's description of the New Side position on conversion was accurate, because it is well known that the revivalists in the early years of the movement were adamant about the necessity of a conviction. That the preaching meetings in Hanover were sensational has already been suggested in Samuel Morris' own narrative to Davies. Furthermore, there is little doubt that these preachers offered criticisms of the established church, though Henry himself admits that they generally did this in private conversations. But it is also important to remember that Henry's knowledge of the New Side came primarily from hearsay and from John Thomson, one of their most ardent opponents among the Old Side Presbyterians. He does not indicate that he ever personally bothered to meet these itinerant preachers and discuss issues with them, or even to attend their preaching. Furthermore, it seems clear that Henry himself felt attacked by the dissenters and was very much on the defensive. Of all the parishes in Virginia, the revival occurred in his, just two years after his arrival, and many of his parishioners had been attracted to the meetings and to the new style of preaching. He may have taken their desertion of him as a personal affront, and as a result was especially eager to put a stop to the movement. Sometime in March 1744/5 Henry visited with the commissary, and the two may have conferred with Governor Gooch about the revivalists. Gooch had, of course, promised toleration to the Presbyterians, but he had thought of the Scots-Irish in the west, not of revivalists on the fringe of the Tidewater.

The problems of the dissenters came into the public eye in a trial before the General Court in Williamsburg commencing 18 April 1745. John Roan, one of the principals, was charged with uttering blasphemy, and his co-defendants were several dissenters who had permitted him to preach in their houses. Among the twenty-two jurymen were William Beverley, Richard Bland, Mann Page, Ralph Wormeley, Carter Burwell, Edmund Berkeley, and Nathaniel Harrison, representatives of some of the most prominent families in Virginia.[1] Governor Gooch delivered a charge to the jury which is indicative of the dim view he took of the activities of the dissenters. He called them

> false teachers that are lately crept into this government; who, without order or license, or producing any testimonial of their education or sect, professing themselves ministers under the pretended influence of new light . . . lead the innocent and ignorant people into all kinds of delusion. . . .
>
> And therefore, gentlemen, since the workers of a deceitful work, blaspheming our sacraments, and reviling our excellent liturgy, are said to draw disciples after the, and we know not whereunto this separation may grow . . . we are called upon by rights of society . . . by the principles of Christianity, to put an immediate stop to the devices and intrigues of these associated schismatics. . . .
>
> However, not meaning to inflame your resentment, as we may without breach of charity pronounce that 'tis not liberty of conscience, but freedom of speech, they so earnestly prosecute; and we are very sure that they have no manner of pretence to any shelter under the acts of toleration, because, admitting they have had regular ordination, they are by those acts obliged, nor can they be ignorant of

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 135. Commissary Dawson, who had been appointed to the Council (which, with the governor, composed the General Court) the preceding year, was absent from his place on the bench.

> it, not only to take the oaths, and with the test to subscribe . . . some of the articles of our religion, before they presume to officiate.[1]

Gooch never questioned the application of toleration in Virginia; he wished to convince the jury that the act did not apply to these particular dissenters because they had not qualified themselves with the proper authorities in order to receive the benefits of toleration, and, even if they had done so, they would have forfeited the privilege by their attacks on the established church. He charged the jury to present or indict the offenders so that they may be tried and silenced "by such method as our law directs," rather than by "violent oppression."

The following day the grand jury brought in presentments for John Roan for "reflecting upon and vilifying the Established Religion" in sermons at Joshua Morris' home; for Thomas Watkins of Henrico for saying "your churches and chappels are no better than the synogogues of Satan," and against Joshua Morris for permitting the unlawful assembly at his house. The case was then carried over to the October session of the General Court.[2] The bringing of these blasphemy charges seems to indicate that Waller's advice was being followed. Without suspecting much in the way of a conspiracy, it does seem that several officials were convinced the dissenter nuisance must be eliminated, and the fact that they were being charged with blasphemy, which

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[1] *Ibid.*, I, 136-137.

[2] *Ibid.*, I, 137-138.

Waller had suggested as a safe and legal approach, seems to indicate his advice was being followed.

Never before in America had the Presbyterians found themselves in court to answer to blasphemy charges. News of this development in Virginia quickly reached both sides of the revivalist controversy to the north, and both parties responded with action. Because Roan had left Virginia some time before the trial, it is possible that the New Side ministers did not learn of the difficulties they were in until the Hanover Presbyterians sent Samuel Morris and three others to present their plight to the meeting of the Conjunct Presbyteries of New Castle and New Brunswick in May 1745.[1] The Hanover emissaries sought a presbytery statement to the governor explaining the position of the New Castle and New Brunswick ministers to counter Gooch's charge that the New Side ministers in Virginia were without proper credentials. The presbyteries composed an address and appointed two of their most distinguished members, Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley to deliver it to Gooch.

The Synod of Philadelphia met in that city on 22 May 1745, and on the 27th considered a letter "from a gentleman in Virginia" containing Gooch's charge to the jury which had been printed. The Synod felt it should send an address to the governor emphasizing that the New Side was not connected with them.

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[1] Morris, who told his story to Davies several years later, spoke of attending the Synod in May. However, the Synod of New York was not formed until September 1745.

The committee to compose the address consisted of Robert Cross, whose Protestation (1741) represented the most adamant stand of the Old Side against the revivalists,[1] Francis Allison, Timothy Griffith, and John Thomson, who no doubt kept the synod fully informed of events in Virginia as he saw them. After reminding Gooch of their gratitude for his favorable reception of their earlier address (1738) and for his protection of Presbyterians in Virginia, the synod assured Gooch that the individuals charged with such unbecoming behavior in the name of Presbyterianism in Virginia had never belonged to the Synod of Philadelphia, but were missionaries sent out by the group which was excluded from the synod in 1741. The message closed with an appeal that the synod members in Virginia may still be protected, and was signed by the moderator.[2]

The synod minutes do not mention the appointment of an emissary to deliver the address. However, as it was customary to entrust a minister with such a mission, it is not improbable that Thomson himself called on the governor upon his return to Virginia. Gooch's reply to the address, dated 20 June 1745, was read at synod the following May. The governor assured the synod that their members would be protected so long as they produced credentials, complied with the law, held services in proper meeting places, and did not disturb "the quiet and unity of our sacred and civil establishments." He also registered his surprise that the synod could imagine he would confuse men of their education with the unchristian actions of the New Side.[1]

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[1] Trinterud, The Forming of an American Tradition, p. 104.

[2] Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 27, 28 May 1745, Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 180-182.

On the part of the New Side, Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley visited Virginia, but we do not know the date of their arrival. According to Samuel Morris' account, Gooch "received them with Condescention & Respect, and granted them Liberty to preach in Hanover." The pair remained a week among the dissenters, and though the most passionate period of the Hanover revival was past, they succeeded in making several conversions.[2] If the governor's reply of 20 June to the Synod of Philadelphia indicates that he had no intention of permitting more revivalists to preach in Virginia, then it might be reasoned that the address from the Conjunct Presbyteries reached him before that of the Synod. On the other hand, since Tennent and Finley applied immediately for permission to preach, indicating their willingness to abide by the law, then Gooch may no longer have considered them itinerants "to be opposed and oppressed," and may have granted this permission in spite of his assurances to the Synod of Philadelphia.

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[1] Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 9 May 1746, *ibid*., p. 183.

[2] Davies, *State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia*, p. 16.

Late in the summer, possibly in the first two weeks of September, William Tennent, younger brother of Gilbert, and Samuel Blair visited the Hanover congregation. Following the procedure of the preceding delegation, Tennent and Blair visited the governor and received his permission to preach. During their visit the two evangelists administered the first Presbyterian communion service to the group since its dissent from the established church.[1]

Both the Tennents, Finley, and Blair attended the first meeting of the new Synod of New York at Elizabethtown, New Jersey in mid-September. Their report of "the wide door that is opened for the preaching of the gospel" in Virginia is indicative of the favorable reception of their southern mission. As a consequence, the synod appointed William Robinson to return to Virginia for several months.[2] Robinson died before undertaking the mission, but the dissenter activities in Virginia by no means ceased.

The dissenters' burdensome knowledge that they had to face trial before the October General Court for the April presentments was lightened in part, no doubt, by the visit of George Whitefield to Hanover. In September 1745 the great evangelist was in Philadelphia in contact with Gilbert Tennent who had recently visited Hanover. It seems likely that at this time Tennent suggested that Whitefield stop in that county en route to his orphanage in Georgia.[1] Whitefield arrived in Hanover on Friday, October 4, 1745, and remained until Thursday the 10th. Six years earlier when the young evangelist preached in Williamsburg he was warmly received by officials of church and state. By 1745, however, his work had come under increasingly sharp attack in the British Isles and in New England from conservative Christians. It is therefore not surprising that the Virginia churchmen did not extend a hearty welcome to Whitefield this time. But, if the clergy of his own church were less than enthusiastic about his visit, many of the ordinary members as well as the dissenters found considerable encouragement in his preaching.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 17.

[2] Minutes of the Synod of New York, 19 September 1745. Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, p. 233.

On the 19th of October the General Court in Williamsburg resumed the trial of the dissenters. Several new names were added to those of Roan, Morris, and Watkins held over from April, namely, James Hubbard, Charles Rice, Isaac Winston, Sr., and Samuel Morris, all on charges of misdemeanors. The defendants all pleaded not guilty. According to the Morris narrative, the six witnesses cited to testify against Roan all deposed in his favor, and James Axford, who had brought the blasphemy charge, fled. The presentment apparently was dropped, but the misdemeanor charges were continued to the next court. Morris reported that he "had Reason to fear being banished from the Colony," but provides no grounds for such a statement.[1] Normally these misdemeanors would have been tried in either April or October 1746 General Court; for some unstated reason they were not resumed until April 1747.

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[1] Luke Tyerman, The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, B.A., of Pembroke College, Oxford (London: Holder and Stoughton, 1877), II, 153.

[2] Accounts of Whitefield's visit to Hanover are to be found in Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 14 October 1745, Virginia Dawson Papers; "News from the Country," Virginia Gazette, 31 October 1745; and Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 17.

The intervening year, 1746, proved an uneventful one for the Hanover Presbyterians. After Whitefield's departure they heard no other minister, but continued to meet at the reading houses. Morris and probably a few other leaders were presented repeatedly at the county court and fined for non-attendance at church. Commissary Dawson visited Patrick Henry sometime in the fall of 1746, and Henry eagerly informed him of the ways in which the dissenters fulminated against the established church.[2] In November, Whitefield returned to Virginia for nearly a week, and visited in Hanover, but we have no record of his activities there at the time.[3]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 142; Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 15.

[2] Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 21 November 1747, Virginia Dawson Papers; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 161.

[3] Tyerman, George Whitefield, II, 165-167.

At the meeting of the General Court in April 1747 the case of Thomas Watkins of Henrico was postponed until October at the defendant's request. On April 20 however, the cases of Charles Rice and Joshua Morris were considered. The attorney general declined to prosecute and the presentments were dismissed. Isaac Winston, Sr., and Samuel Morris were tried that day, and the jury found that Roan had preached in their houses but not against the canons of the Church of England, and the cases were continued to the October court "for the matters of law arising thereupon to be argued." Later in the same session, upon motion of the Attorney General, the King's writ of Certiorari was awarded to transfer presentments of the Hanover County Court of November 1746 against Samuel Morris, John Sims, Roger Shackleford, Thomas Green, and William Allen to the October General Court.[1]

One of the strangest notes in the sequence of appearances before the high court was the motion of Peyton Randolph, the Attorney General, to transfer the cases against the Hanover dissenters from their own county court where such matters would normally be tried, to the General Court. Although postponing cases in Virginia court was not uncommon, the continual delay over these particular cases seems excessive and may have been intentional. As Attorney General, it was probably Randolph who prosecuted the dissenters at each of their various appearances before the court. Whether he served as leader of the anti-dissenter group in the capital and personally instigated many of the cases would be difficult to say in the absence of definite evidence.[1] However, his removal of the Hanover cases to the General Court may indicate he desired to prosecute the cases personally. Furthermore, the fact that a few years later Randolph sought an official legal opinion in England against a broad interpretation of the Toleration Act suggests that he opposed the intrusion of dissenters in Virginia all along.

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 160-161.

The cases transferred from Hanover court were not tried until April 1748, and in the meanwhile events had occurred among the Hanover Presbyterians which significantly altered their status as dissenters. On 14 April 1747 there appeared before the General Court a newly ordained evangelist from New Castle Presbytery seeking a license under the Toleration Act. After taking the oaths, subscribing the test, and the required Articles of Religion, Samuel Davies was licensed to meet congregations at houses on the lands of Samuel Morris, David Rice, and Stephen Leacy in Hanover County, and Thomas Watkins in Henrico County.[2]

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[1] Bidwell, "The Morris Reading Houses," p. 33 indicates that Randolph, along with Benjamin Waller and Councillor Thomas Lee, was one of the leading lay opponents of the Hanover dissenters.

[2] Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 19.

This occasion was a milestone in the development of religious liberty in America, for it marked the first time that the highest court in the largest colony recognized dissenting rights under the Toleration Act by issuing a license. Indeed, it was the first time on record that dissenters had applied to this court for certification of their right to toleration, for Presbyterians preceding Samuel Davies had been licensed by county courts as in the case of Mackie and Makemie, or had been assured of toleration by the governor as for the Synod of Philadelphia, and the Tennents and Finley, or had not even bothered to register with anyone, as with Robinson and Roan.[1] According to tradition, the sickly young Davies made a striking impression on the governor and commissary, and though the majority on the bench opposed granting the license, Gooch convinced them to be charitable to the young man.[2]

Samuel Davies appeared in the colony at the time the dissenters' spirits had reached their lowest point. In response to complaints received from German settlers about the activities of Moravian missionaries in Virginia, on 3 April 1747 the

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[1] In April 1725 dissenters in Richmond County, probably Presbyterians, applied to their county court for license, and that body referred the problem to the Governor and Council before acting. This decision of the Council in favor of granting a license was not, however, a judicial decision of the General Court. Executive Journals, Council of Colonial Virginia, 29 April, 4 May 1725, IV, 81, 86.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 160.

Council authorized the governor to issue a proclamation against all itinerant preachers who held meetings in Virginia, whether Moravian, Methodist, or New Light.[1] This proclamation was posted in each county, and the sheriff of Hanover nailed his copy to the door of Morris' reading house. When this occurred just two weeks before their scheduled trial in Williamsburg, Morris and his followers were so discouraged that they did not hold their regular Sunday service.

On the surface it seems illogical that the General Court would grant Davies a license to preach in four places less than two weeks after the same men acting in their other role as governor and council issued a proclamation against New Light itinerants. The explanation probably lies in the simple fact of Davies' willingness to cooperate with the officials. The proclamation berated itinerants who refused to apply for licenses, yet Davies, even before he went to Hanover, presented himself to the high court to be duly licensed according to the letter of the law. The fact that the trial of the dissenters was scheduled for two weeks after the granting of the license was pure coincidence; the cases were already on the docket and were for charges of misdemeanors committed two years before Davies arrived.

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[1] Executive Journals, Council of Colonial Virginia, V, 227-228, 290.

Davies remained in the Hanover area at least seven weeks,[1] in a continuous round of activity, including sermons almost every day. Although the great fervor of the revival had diminished before his arrival, Davies nonetheless impressed the dissenters deeply, and they sent a call to New Castle Presbytery for him to be their minister.[2]

Davies made a far less favorable impression on the Reverend Patrick Henry. Available evidence indicates that Henry employed numerous measures to oppose the dissenters and their ministers. In 1746 he had arranged for the printing of a sermon by an Old Side minister, John Caldwell, preached to his congregation at New Londonderry, New Hampshire in 1741 and printed in Boston in 1742. The sermon was highly critical of the New Side, and it seems more than just possible that John Thomson had supplied Henry with the original printing.[3] Henry made Davies' acquaintance soon after the young man arrived in Hanover, and Davies gave the Anglican parson a copy of his detailed explanation of and reservations on the Articles of

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[1] He was licensed 14 April; Henry wrote Dawson that Davies planned to leave Hanover the 8th or 9th of June. Henry to Dawson, 8 June 1747, Virginia Dawson Papers.

[2] Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 20.

[3] John Caldwell, An Impartial Trial of the Spirit Operating in this Part of the World . . . (Williamsburg: William Parks, 1746).

Religion, dated 21 April 1747.[1] With apparent relish Henry undertook the role of watchdog over the dissenters' activities, and the commissary's informant thereupon. When bad weather prevented his journey to Williamsburg to confer with Dawson, Henry wrote the commissary, enclosing a copy of Davies' explanation and reporting on the new minister's reception in Hanover. Davies visited with Henry again before he left the county in June, and Henry rushed to report the encounter to Dawson. Henry had also learned that Davies planned to preach in various places to the south and west, including Goochland courthouse, and that posters had been distributed to attract large crowds. Sensing an opportunity to harm the dissenters, Henry wrote,

> I persuade myself that the Governor and Council never intended to encourage Itinerant Preachers, and therefore think it my duty to acquaint you with this man's behavior. I think also, that the Governour, by his Indulgence, did not allow Mr Davies to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which not withstanding he did celebrate . . . and had a great many Communicants.[2]

The Reverend Patrick Henry was conscientious to the point of self-righteousness, and it is not surprising that he undertook almost singlehandedly a campaign against these dissenters now licensed by the General Court. He was not only the watchdog over the Presbyterians, but also served as self-appointed judge of the activities of his fellow Anglican ministers, and embarked on a two-year quarrel with the minister of a neighboring parish whom Henry believed slack in his duties and unwise in his choice of friends. Although he expressed the desire to "promote the Credit of Religion . . . especially now when the Enemies of true & resonable Religion have their eyes upon us," this public quarrel must have had the opposite effect on Henry's parishioners.[1]

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[1] Samuel Davies to Patrick Henry, 21 April 1747, Virginia Dawson Papers.

[2] Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 8 June 1747, Virginia Dawson Papers.

Although Davies had left the colony temporarily, Henry continued to worry about the strength of the dissenters and kept himself busy devising schemes to thwart them. On behalf of the Reverend John Brunskill of the neighboring St. Margaret's Parish in Caroline County he requested from the commissary tracts on the Common Prayer. Brunskill was troubled with the dissenters in his parish, and even his own clerk had quit his post to become a reader in one of the meeting houses. Dissenters were also strong in St. Martin's Parish in western Hanover County where Robert Barrett was the minister, for one of his parishioners had become a dissenting reader.[2]

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[1] Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 21 November 1747, explaining the misconduct of the Rev. Alexander White of St. David's in King William County; Alexander White to Dawson, 30 October 1747 defending his position and castigating Henry; White also defended his position in a letter to Dawson on 19 February 1747/8 and 4 July 1748, Virginia Dawson Papers.

[2] Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 3 December 1747, Virginia Dawson Papers; John Clement (complier), "Anglican Clergymen Licensed to the American Colonies, 1710-1744, with Biographical sketches," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, XVII (September 1948), pp. 220, 223.

In November 1747 Henry contacted William Stith, former master of the grammar school at William and Mary and present minister of Henrico Parish,[1] about measures to control the dissenters. Stith agreed to assist Henry in drawing a petition to the governor and council against itinerant preachers, in the hopes that action may be taken by the April 1748 General Court. Stith, however, did not sustain interest in the project, and nothing seems to have come of it.[2]

Thus, between 1738 and 1748 Virginia was removed from its religious isolation from the rest of the colonies and exposed to the two forces which have, more than any others, marked American Christianity as unique: the multiplicity of denominations, and a strong current of evangelism. The large groups of Scots-Irish Presbyterians who moved into the western parts of the colony in this decade are really responsible for introducing multi-denominationalism to the colony, even though there had been Quakers, and Luterans and German Reformed groups and even a few Presbyterians living in Virginia for many years before the Scots-Irish influx, because these new settlers came in such large numbers, were so determined to maintain their traditional religious practices, and were given considerable freedom of operation without governmental interference. This made it possible for them to develop strength as a self-conscious religious group.

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[1] Clement, "Anglican Clergymen Licensed . . . ," p. 245.

[2] Henry to Dawson, 3 December 1747, Virginia Dawson Papers.

The radical evangelism which had marked the Great Awakening in the northern colonies appeared spontaneously in Virginia but succeeded because the New Side in the Presbyterian controversy adopted the group, nurtured it carefully, and provided it with the kind of dynamic but educated leadership that would enable it to survive in Tidewater Virginia.

The interplay of these challenging new forces and the institutions they were challenging, the established church and the government's concept of the role of religion in society, led to the development of ideas with a decidedly revolutionary flavor such as the broader participation of the people in their own institutional affairs, the institution, in this case, being the church. The experience of choosing one's form of worship and theological tenets has long been associated with the desire to participate more fully in the direction of the political institutions which control one's civil affairs. The implanting of Presbyterianism in Virginia through the evangelical awakening with its efforts to appeal to the masses served to introduce that option and participation in a colony where it had not previously been available.

III. SAMUEL DAVIES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR BROADER TOLERATION IN VIRGINIA

In April of 1748 Samuel Davies settled in Hanover County, Virginia, to become the first permanent minister to the New Light congregations east of the mountains. This move marked the opening of a new phase in the evangelicals' struggle for recognition of their right to practice religion according to the dictates of their consciences, for they now had a recognized leader. None of the visiting evangelists from New Castle Presbytery had remained long enough to assume a position of leadership in the Hanover area, and no single figure among the dissenters themselves possessed the qualities that seemed necessary to enter into combat with the government. Samuel Morris had done much to organize and sustain the dissenters, and he was a literate and dedicated man, but as an ordinary bricklayer in the planter-dominated society of eastern Virginia he had neither the time, the resources, nor the respect necessary to undertake leadership of a long campaign to extend the civil rights of dissenters.

Davies, however, was well-qualified to undertake a concerted effort to gain concessions from the government. He had been raised and educated in Delaware and Pennsylvania, where toleration of all sects was the pattern. He was young, energetic, and fresh from a classical education under Samuel Blair. He had no family obligations as yet, and as an ordained minister he had the professional obligation, as well as the time to devote to the cause.

When he arrived in Virginia this second time, Davies brought with him his schoolmate and close friend, John Rodgers, who hoped to assist him for several months. The two young men spent a Sunday in Hanover, where both preached, then journeyed to Williamsburg to obtain a license for Rodgers from the General Court. Davies had been licensed by the court the preceding year with no difficulty, and the men presumed Rodgers would be licensed similarly upon presentation of his presbyterial credentials. In the past year some of the councillors had cause to reconsider the licensing procedure, and while Governor Gooch favored granting Rodgers permission to preach, Attorney General Peyton Randolph and several councillors wished to discuss the matter further. As a result of this move, the council denied Rodgers a license on the grounds that his credentials were only presbyterial, not synodical. In addition, the Council dismissed Davies' and Rodgers' petition for a reconsideration of the case.[1]

Davies later expressed the belief that the Council would have granted them their rights had it not been for the "horrendous

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 165.

& shocking Reports spread Abroad concerning us by officious Malignants,"[1] so it may be that Patrick Henry's anti-dissenter campaign was at least partially successful. Foote reports that "one of the clergy of Hanover" (undoubtedly Henry) followed Davies and Rodgers to Williamsburg to report that Rodgers had already preached without license and to demand legal action against him, but that he received a rebuke from Gooch for such unchristian conduct. The governor, Commissary Dawson, and John Blair tried to persuade the Council to reconsider, but in vain, so Rodgers left the colony.[2]

This arbitrary action on the part of the Council seems difficult to comprehend, especially in view of the fact that the same group of men, acting in their capacity as the General Court, finally completed the trials of the dissenters held over from 1745, in the same month that they refused Rodgers his license. Two of the defendants were fined a mere twenty shillings, and the court dismissed the remaining case. The only explanation for this erratic behavior seems to lie in the belief of the councillors that they had the authority to determine the number of preachers to which the dissenters were entitled, and they chose to admit only one at a time.

That this one licensed minister was an immediate source of inspiration for the dissenters was obvious in October 1748, when Davies sponsored a petition to the General Court to authorize three additional meeting houses for the dissenters on the land of Joseph Shelton near Owen's Creek in Louisa County, Tucker Woodson's land in Goochland, and John Sutton's at Needwood in Caroline County.[1]

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[1] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 21.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 166.

Davies served as his own counsel at the application before the court. A full discussion of the rights of dissenters apparently occurred at this time, with Davies pitted against Peyton Randolph, the attorney general.[2] A large part of Davies' argument seems to have been aimed at proving that the Toleration Act did extend to Virginia, first, because Quakers and Old Side Presbyterians already had been tolerated in the colony, and secondly, because dissenters were made to qualify for toleration under the specific provisions of the English act.[3] Some Virginians, including Randolph, maintained that the act did not apply to the colony,[4] but the earlier action of the governor and the court in granting toleration and licenses to ministers and meeting houses on the basis of the 1699 Virginia statute certainly negated that contention. The governor and council in 1748 were either unaware of this act, or deliberately chose to ignore it.

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[1] Ibid., I, 168.

[2] There is no official record of this meeting. The only account was related years later by Capt. John Morton, who was present at the time, and appears in "Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Davies," Evangelical and Literary Magazine, II (March 1819), 118. The highly flattering nature of the account casts suspicion on its accuracy.

[3] George M. Bost, "Samuel Davies: Colonial Revivalist and Champion of Religious Liberty" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1941), p. 184; Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, pp. 74-76.

[4] Davies, in a letter to Philip Doddridge, 2 October 1750 says, "It has been alleged that the act of tolleration does not extend to this Colony. . . ." Perry, Historical Collections, I, 370.

At this hearing, Davies' logic must have convinced the councillors that he deserved the additional meeting houses. He observed that the English penal acts against dissenters were not Virginia law, but that the statute requiring church attendance was analogous to them. The Toleration Act was designed to remit penalties of the former acts in England; because Virginia had accepted this act into her body of laws, dissenters were exempted from the penalties of non-attendance. Therefore, dissenters were permitted to worship according to law. But, he argued, the dissenters lived at such distances that one meeting house could not accommodate them. Consequently, if licenses were not granted for more meeting houses, the court was not obeying the spirit of the law permitting dissenter worship, and the court itself was compelling dissenters to break the church-attendance law.[1]

The decision of the court on 1 November 1748 to grant Davies the three additional meeting houses indicates that Randolph represented the minority viewpoint among the government officials, and also emphasizes the increased strength the dissenters had gained with the coming of a leader. Nonetheless, this victory for the dissenters should not be seen as a capitulation on the part of the councillors, for, in fact, by granting the licenses they were emphasizing the fact that they held the authority to determine the number of meeting houses that would be permitted in Virginia, just as in April they had demonstrated their authority to determine the number of dissenting ministers who would be allowed to preach in the colony.

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 171.

The real issue in this court hearing was not whether the Toleration Act applied in Virginia, but rather, the extent to which it applied. The problem of the dissenters was one of interpretation: namely, whether the English practice would prevail in Virginia, or whether the court had the right to interpret each case individually.[1] For the present, the court chose the latter independent course of action.

Two years later, in the spring of 1750, the court of New Kent County, on petition of several residents, granted permission for the erection of another meeting house, the eighth for Davies to serve. The General Court, in pursuit of its independent policy, felt that the licensing of meeting houses was its prerogative, and rescinded the license.[2] Furthermore, the court at this time declared that a dissenting minister was entitled to only one meeting house, and Davies feared that he would lose six of his seven licenses.[1]

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[1] Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 75.

[2] William Dawson to the Bishop of London, 27 July 1750, Perry, Historical Collections, I, 366.

This latest decision was, of course, a victory for the dissenters' opponents. From the viewpoint of these staunch churchmen, Davies was seeking privileges not even granted to the clergy of the established church. The focal point of the Virginia church was the local parish with its specified geographic area and its minister, whose activities were restricted to his assigned parish. These men were not permitted to travel at random to other parishes to preach without the permission of the resident rector, and to them it seemed both unfair and irresponsible that Davies and his followers should seek such a privilege. The Commissary wrote his bishop

> Whatever claim Mr. Davies may have to a legal Indulgence, I am sure that he has no title to favour from the Government. . . . I think it is high time for the Government to interpose, to give their immodesty a check and to restrain their teachers within the bounds of a parish, lest their Insolence should grow to dangerous heights.[2]

Reflecting this same view of the dissenters, Peyton Randolph wrote that "if they are permitted to range and raise contributions over the whole country, when our clergy are confined to a single parish," it will "sow dissension and confusion among the people."[3]

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[1] Samuel Davies to Philip Doddridge, 2 October 1750, ibid., I, 370.

[2] William Dawson to Bishop of London, 17 June 1752, ibid., I, 385-386.

[3] Undated MS in Virginia Religious Papers, Library of Congress; quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 80.

At this point, the dissenters, the churchmen, and the legalists in Virginia appealed in England for support in their interpretation of the toleration act; Davies out of fear that the dissenters might lose the few privileges they had won, the churchmen out of fear that the position of the Virginia church, built so carefully over the past century was seriously threatened, and the councillors for a clarification of their own powers.

The Virginia toleration problem as presented in England hinged on the interpretation of an occasional conformity act passed by Parliament in December 1711.[1] In answer to the problem of whether a dissenting minister may preach to a congregation in a county other than the one in which he originally was licensed, a clause of the act stated

> That any such preacher or teacher, so duly qualified according to the said act [of 1689] shall be and is hereby allowed to officiate in any congregation, although the same be not in the county wherein he was so qualified; provided that the said congregation, or place of meeting hath been before such officiating, duly certified and registered or recorded according to the said act: and such preacher or teacher, shall, if required, produce a certificate of his having so qualified himself . . . ; and shall also before any justice of the peace of such county or place where he shall so officiate, make, and subscribe such declaration,

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[1] [Great Britain. Parliament], Journals of the House of Lords Beginning Anno Octavo Annae Reginae, 1709, XIX, 343-345; The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the Present Time. . . . , IV (London: Richard Chandler, 1742), p. 231.

> and take such oaths as are mentioned in the said act, if thereunto required.[1]

This amendment had never been incorporated into the body of Virginia law by the General Assembly, and the question was thus open to interpretation. Must the Virginia court follow the British practice and consider the Toleration Act incomplete without this clarification, or, because the newer act was not recorded in Virginia, was the General Court therefore empowered to make its own decisions in individual cases? The question carried broader significance than the immediate problems of dissenting congregations, important though they were in the development of civil liberties in Virginia. Also in question was the whole concept of the British empire and the relation of the individual parts to the mother country. The discussion of this particular issue was, in its own way, one of the many stepping stones along the path to independence, though surely few contemporaries would have recognized it as such.

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[1] An act for preserving the protestant religion, by better securing the church of England, as by law established; and for confirming the toleration granted to protestant dissenters by an act, intituled, "An act for exempting their Majesties protestant subjects, dissenting from the church of England, from the penalties of certain laws," and for supplying the defects thereof; and for the further securing the protestant succession, by requiring the practicers of the law in North Britain to take the oaths, and subscribe the declaration therein mentioned. 10th Queen Anne, Cap. 2. Danby Pickering, The Statutes at Large from the Eighth to the Twelfth Year of Queen Anne, XII (Cambridge: Joseph Bentham, 1764), pp. 279-280.

Commissary William Dawson initiated the appeals to England, for on 27 July 1750, nearly three months after the General Court decision to revoke the meeting house license granted by New Kent County Court, he wrote his superior in London about the attorney general's opinion in the case, of the seven houses already licensed for Davies, and of the royal instructions to the governor in regard to toleration. The king had stated, "You are to permit a liberty of Conscience to all persons except papists, so they be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of same, not giving offence or scandal to the Government." Dawson sought the bishop's opinion as to whether granting seven licenses for one minister was not "greater indulgence" than the act of toleration or royal instructions intended, and he enclosed a copy of one of Davies' licenses for the bishop's inspection.[1] The bishop did not reply until late December, so that Dawson was not armed with support from Sherlock until early 1751.

The president of the Council, Colonel Thomas Lee, who had served as acting governor since the death of Lieutenant Governor Gooch in 1749, also wrote to the bishop that summer, requesting that the prelate lay the matter before the King in Council for advice.[2] Sometime in August 1751 Lee personally informed Davies of his letter and of the commissary's. This revelation undoubtedly alarmed Davies and forced on him the realization that he, too, must seek help from important sources in England. Before acting, however, Davies wrote Dawson asking that the commissary send him a copy of his letter to the bishop, or a summary of its contents because, as the other party involved in the case, he had "a legal right to know the true state of it."[1] The awaited answer did not come, and rather than appeal directly to the Bishop of London as had been his original intention,[2] Davies sought help from a prominent English dissenter, Dr. Philip Doddridge.[3]

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[1] William Dawson to Bishop of London, 27 July 1750, Perry, Historical Collections, I, 366.

[2] Davies to Philip Doddridge, 2 October 1750. Ibid., I, 370 refers to this letter, but a copy of the original letter has never been located.

Davies wrote Doddridge a long introductory letter, tracing for him the beginning of the Hanover revival and the progress of the dissenters under his pastorate. He then reported the tendency of the Virginia government to curtail the liberties of the dissenters, especially in the decision against the New

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[1] Davies to William Dawson, 19 August 1750. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 173-174.

[2] Ibid.

[3] It seems likely that some of Davies' colleagues in the Synod of New York advised him to contact Doddridge. Doddridge (1702-1751), after an education at the dissenting academies entered the dissenting ministry in 1730. He conducted an excellent academy at Northampton, amassed a large library, and wrote books on ethics, divinity, education, and dissent. He had fostered numerous plans to unify and revive the dissenting churches and improve relations with the Church of England, and was on friendly terms with the Bishop of London. "Philip Doddridge," Dictionary of National Biography (London: Macmillan, 1911), XV, 158-164; J. W. Ashley Smith, The Birth of Modern Education (London: Independent Press, 1954), pp. 129-134.

Kent meeting house. At this point, Davies solicited Doddridge's advice on whether dissenting ministers in England were permitted a plurality of meeting houses. He warned Doddridge that Colonel Lee had written the king and council an account that might be "defective" in its description of the dissenters' situation and urged that Doddridge intercede in their behalf.[1]

For the time being the dissenting problem was out of the hands of the Virginians, and all involved parties could only maintain the status quo until the various opinions and advices trickled over from England.

The first group to state an opinion was the Lords of Trade, in a letter dated Whitehall, 1 September 1750, which may have been in response to Colonel Lee's letter of that summer to the King and Council.[2] The board wrote:

> With regard to the affair of Mr. Davies the Presbyterian, as Toleration and a free exercise of Religion is so valuable a branch of true liberty, and so essential to the enriching and improving of a Trading Nation, it should ever be held sacred in His Majesty's Colonies; we must therefore earnestly recommend it to your care, that nothing be done which can in the least affect that great point; at the same time you will do well to admonish Mr. Davies to make proper use of that indulgence which our laws so wisely grant to those who differ from the Established Church, and

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[1] Davies to Philip Doddridge, 2 October 1750, Perry, Historical Collections, I, 368-371.

[2] This letter was addressed to Colonel Lee, who died before he received it. The new president of the council and acting governor, Lewis Burwell, showed the letter to the council, and Dawson, who was a member of the council, copied this portion of the letter and sent it to Bishop Sherlock in August 1751.

> to be cautious not to afford any just cause of complaint to the Clergy of the Church of England, or to the people in General.[1]

It is impossible to gauge the impact of this advice on the Virginia Council. It certainly omitted the specific information the Council sought, namely, whether they were justified in limiting the number of houses licensed for one minister. It seemed to give the councillors freedom to urge moderation on Davies, yet it served as a warning to them not to attempt forcible restriction of Davies' privileges. The fact that Dawson sent this letter to the bishop may indicate that the council considered the advice as a serious warning to them.

Before he saw this letter from the Lords of Trade, Dawson may have received the bishop's reply to his own letter of 27 July, although this was not written until four months after that of the Lords of Trade. The bishop agreed with Attorney General Randolph's decision, "for the Act of Toleration confines the Preachers to a particular place, to be certified and entered and so the Practice here has been." Sherlock realized that the act of 10th Queen Anne permitted a dissenting teacher to preach in another county, but he must have assumed that this act did not apply in Virginia. He further believed that the toleration act "was never intended to permit them [dissenters] to set up Itinerant Preachers to gather

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[1] Lords of Trade to Colonel Thomas Lee, 1 September 1750, quoted by Dawson to Bishop of London, 16 August 1751. Perry, Historical Collections, I, 379-380.

Congregations where there was none before." Although he pointed out that in England the power of licensure belonged to the county justices, he supported Randolph's opinion that in Virginia this power was vested in the governor. The bishop intended these thoughts only as his private opinion, but he promised to seek the opinion and advice of "our Lawyers" on the case.[1]

Philip Doddridge must have received Davies' letter of 2 October 1750 late in the winter, and probably early in May 1751 he decided to send pertinent parts of it directly to Bishop Sherlock. The bishop appreciated the gesture as well as the honest clarity of Davies' plea, and on 11 May 1751 he replied to Doddridge's intercession by sending him extracts from the account of the dissenters which he had received from Virginia, and his reply.[2] Sherlock expanded the views he had sent Dawson for Doddridge's benefit, stressing that the New Lights had entered territory administered by the established church and had attempted to draw converts from it, an action surely contrary to the spirit and intent of the Toleration Act. He also emphasized that he and Dawson had no actual jurisdiction in the matter, for that authority rested in the civil government.

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[1] Bishop of London, to William Dawson, 25 December 1750. Virginia Dawson Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Bishop of London to Philip Doddridge, 11 May 1751. Perry, Historical Collections, I, 371-374. Sherlock refers to Dawson's letter of 27 July 1750 and his own reply of 25 December 1750. This was the letter that Davies had hoped Dawson personally would send him.

And, to assure Doddridge that he was concealing nothing, the bishop added that he had not yet received an opinion from English lawyers on the case.[1]

Doddridge wrote Sherlock again, immediately on receipt of the bishop's letter because he wished to correct the bishop's impression that the Toleration Act confined preachers to a particular place already standing. Doddridge explained that in England three people could appear before the justices at Quarter Sessions to apply to have the residence of one of them licensed for worship, and that this "license of the place" would be granted with no mention of an assigned minister. Likewise, individual preachers must be licensed, but not for a particular congregation. As long as the minister and the meeting place have their separate licenses, there is no breach of the law over itineration.[2] The bishop was in no hurry to communicate this new information to Virginia however, for we have no record of his informing Dawson of his erroneous interpretation of the licensing question in England.

Davies had meanwhile received no word from England by the time he wrote his long account of dissent in Virginia to Joseph Bellamy on 28 June 1751, so he appended a section tracing the restraints imposed on the dissenters by the civil government in the event that "this Narrative may come into the Hands of some who may have some Influence to secure our Privileges, or procure their Enlargement, if it may be judged that we lie under any illegal Restraints."[1]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Doddridge to Bishop of London, 14 May 1751. Ibid., I, 374-377.

While Davies was writing this appendix, a letter from Doddridge, probably written in May, was crossing the ocean bound for Hanover.[2] Doddridge reported that he had sent a portion of Davies' letter to the bishop, and enclosed the bishop's reply containing extracts from Dawson's letter and his reply. Doddridge explained to Davies, as he had to the bishop, that in England ministers and meeting houses were licensed separately, thereby making itineration completely legal. He then suggested a form of petition for the New Kent County dissenters to draw up in an attempt to regain their forfeited license. If the court should refuse to grant this license of the place, the lawyers consulted by Doddridge believed that Davies could present his case in an English court. Doddridge had discussed the dissenters' situation with the Archbishop of Canterbury and found him sympathetic.[3]

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[1] This is the letter which Bellamy had printed under Davies' name as The State of Religion among the Protestant Dissenters in Virginia . . ., "Appendix," p. 41.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 174.

[3] Doddridge to Davies (________) 1751. Ibid., I, 174-176. This letter arrived in Virginia in December 1751, as reported in a letter from Davies to Benjamin Avery, 21 May 1752, Ibid., I, 207.

This letter gave Davies great encouragement. In mid-August he wrote to the commissary informing him that he had been asked to send some testimony of the dissenters' loyalty to the civil government and their "inoffensive Conduct" to England so that an impartial judgement could be made of the case. Davies had concluded that the Hanover County justices who knew these men would be best qualified to attest to their fidelity, and was writing to inform Dawson that he planned to present a petition to this effect at the next meeting of the court, in the event the commissary should wish to comment on the situation. If the commissary should judge it necessary, Davies reported that all the dissenters would be willing to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, presumably before the General Court.[1]

Davies contacted the justices, as he told Dawson he intended, and one of them showed his letter to the Reverend Patrick Henry. The vicious nature of Henry's anti-dissenter campaign comes out most clearly in his reaction to this effort of Davies to have his legal rights determined in the mother country. The parson immediately wrote Dawson,

> I shall use my Interest with our Court to have the Consideration of their Petition deferred till I receive your Directions; as, I'm afraid I cannot have them before next Court: But if I cannot prevail with the Justices to put it off till then; I hope, I shall be able to give them

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[1] Davies to William Dawson, 15 August 1751. Virginia Dawson Papers, Library of Congress.

> such Reasons as will determine them to reject the Petition.[1]

The reasons listed by Henry to "demonstrate that both Mr. Davies, and many of his Congregation, have fail'd in giving sufficient evidence of their Fidelity to the Civil Government, and inoffensive Conduct" were based on a wholly erroneous interpretation of the various situations. Henry claimed that Davies performed ministerial functions in Hanover and Henrico before being qualified, when, in fact he had been licensed by the General Court before he ever preached in Virginia. Henry reported that he had illegally performed the marriage ceremony, yet, in March 1749, Governor Gooch had specifically granted Davies permission to do this as long as he gave the fees to the parish minister. When one Anglican minister threatened to sue him for performing a marriage in his parish, Davies asked the commissary to obtain from the Council a confirmation or denial of the governor's license to him, and volunteered to give up the practice of the Council wished.[2] Henry also claimed that the dissenters held unlawful assemblies in their meeting houses in contempt of the Toleration Act, yet in view of the fact that the houses had been licensed, it would seem difficult to prove this. Henry's only contention that could have held up in court was that Davies had illegally preached in the southern parts of Virginia in May 1750. Finally, Henry asked the commissary to join in his harassment scheme by searching the records of the General Court to find anything that could be used as evidence against the dissenters.[1]

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[1] The Rev. Patrick Henry to William Dawson, 22 August 1751. Ibid.

[2] Davies to William Dawson, 3 February 1749/50, and 7 April 1750. Ibid.

Patrick Henry must have been moved to embark upon this scheme when an earlier plan of his to thwart the dissenters failed. The preceding week Dawson had written Bishop Sherlock enclosing a petition from several Anglican clergymen which "was not presented to the assembly, several Members being of opinion that they were restrained by the Toleration Act from granting relief." Dawson himself had been ill at the time and was able to use this as an excuse for not taking action in support of his clergy.[2] The five clergymen who signed the petition were David Mossom of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent County; John Brunskill of St. Margaret's Parish, Caroline County; John Robertson of St. John's Parish, King William County; Robert Barrett of St. Martin's Parish, Hanover County; and, of course, Henry himself.[3] All five of them were ministers to whom Davies and his followers posed a personal threat. There was no support indicated from Tidewater parishes where there were no Presbyterians, yet if this were really a matter of legal importance to the entire church, it might be expected that a wider sampling of Anglican ministers could have been obtained in support of the request that the Burgesses take action against these itinerants who seemed to flaunt the provisions of the Toleration Act. The device which the five ministers wished the Burgesses to use was the enforcement of an act of 1642 requiring all ministers in the colony to produce testimonial of ordination from the Bishop of London and subscribe to the constitution of the Church of England.[1] Their request virtually constituted a denial of the application of the Toleration Act. The Burgesses refused the request, but unfortunately for the clear growth of toleration in Virginia, the matter was settled privately and not in formal session of the assembly. If the matter had been presented, debated, and then rejected, it would have been a matter of public record, and the rights of the dissenters would have been upheld in part at least by the elected colonial assembly rather than being dependent upon legal opinion from England.

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[1] Henry to Dawson, 22 August 1751.

[2] William Dawson to Bishop of London, 16 August 1751. Perry, Historical Collections, I, 379-381.

[3] "A List of the Present Ministers of Virginia, Oct$^{\underline{r}}$ 30, 1754," ibid., I, 411-413.

Various Anglicans had taken action in support of the Presbyterian position and now Davies once again felt he must make further attempts to support his own case. In January 1752, after receiving Doddridge's letter of advice, he was moved to write an extraordinarily long letter to the Bishop of London explaining the situation of the Virginia dissenters. Wishing to be completely correct in his approach, Davies chose as his intermediary the Protestant Dissenting Deputies, founded in London in 1732, and consisting of two delegates elected by each congregation of the Three Denominations (Baptist, Independent, and Presbyterian) within ten miles of London. Between General Meetings, a committee of twenty-one directed the work of the group. The Dissenting Deputies, as an organized pressure group under the able leadership of Dr. Benjamin Avery, became the powerful self-appointed watchdog of the civil rights of British dissenters. The Deputies probably achieved their most outstanding successes in their efforts to protect and expand the religious and political liberties of dissenters in the American colonies.[1] It was undoubtedly for this reason that Davies sent his letter first to Jasper Maudit and the other committee members for them to approve and forward to the bishop.

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[1] "Petition of some of the Clergy of this Dominion to the Speaker & Gentlemen of the House of Burgesses" (1751). Ibid., I, 381-383.

Davies stated the situation clearly. The number of Presbyterian dissenters under his care consisted of about two hundred families--enough to form two congregations if they lived contiguously. However, they were scattered over six or seven counties, some living twenty miles from the nearest meeting house. The synod had so few ministers that it could spare only Davies to care for them. Under such circumstances was his travelling to serve his congregation really illegal? Did not true toleration depend on the accessibility of worship? He pointed out an excellent analogy in the established church. The Reverend Robert Barrett of St. Martin's Parish ministered to three congregations in two counties by the device of "chapels of ease" created by the legislature. Can a Presbyterian congregation not be similarly divided?

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[1] Carl Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 39-45; Bernard L. Manning, Protestant Dissenting Deputies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp.

He stated that his own license was granted by the General Court and governor, which made it valid in the entire colony, and not in just one county. On this basis, Davies felt qualified to preach in any licensed meeting house in Virginia.

Davies corrected an erroneous statement in the Bishop's letter to Doddridge to the effect that he was an intruder disrupting the established church in an area where there were no dissenters; he simply traced the growth of the Hanover revival, and noted that several meeting houses were licensed before his arrival in the colony.

He then justified his preaching on weekdays, which the Anglicans had found an objectionable practice, on the grounds that this was the only way he could reach some of his congregation more than once a month. This in no way meant Presbyterians scorned honest labor, as the commissary had charged, and, as a touch of irony, Davies noted that some had been more hurt in the pocket by the fines imposed on them for worshipping in their own manner than by missing work to hear a weekday sermon. Finally, as proof of the veracity of his case, Davies asked the bishop's permission to publish the letter.[1]

The letter was never given to the bishop. Benjamin Avery and Jasper Maudit, acting for the committee, felt that the letter was entirely too long, and, because Davies had added a lengthy postscript criticizing the established clergy and supporting the bishop's scheme to introduce bishops in the colonies, they felt it unwise to give to Sherlock. After all, one of the major projects of the Dissenting Deputies was the opposition of the introduction of bishoprics in the colonies.[2]

While Davies awaited the reaction of the Dissenting Deputies and the Bishop of London to his January letter, the toleration question became a subject of public debate in Virginia. The debate was opened in a letter to the editor of the Virginia Gazette from one "Philo Virginia" in behalf of wider toleration of dissenters. This anonymous writer recognized a certain value in an established church to promote the "well-being of society," and observed that most dissenters, particularly Virginia-born converts from the church, would even willingly pay parish tithes as long as they enjoyed peaceable toleration. However, he submitted the question for consideration of the recently convened General Assembly as to whether it might be in the public interest to make certain exceptions to this pattern.

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[1] Davies to the Bishop of London, 10 January 1752. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 180-200.

[2] Benjamin Avery to Davies (_______) 1752. Ibid., I, 211-212. Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre, pp. 45-53 and 83-115 provides an excellent discussion of the position of the Dissenting Deputies on the episcopacy issue.

The group he singled out for exception were the Scots-Irish who had recently moved in large numbers from Pennsylvania to the new western counties. These born Presbyterians had no intention of becoming Anglicans upon moving to Virginia, yet here they were confronted with the same tax burden that had forced them to leave Ireland. Pointing out the economic advantages to Virginia of having these diversified farms, and contrasting the wealth of Pennsylvania which had welcomed dissenters with the sluggish economy of Virginia which had not welcomed them, Philo Virginia urged that the assembly make every effort to encourage these Irishmen and other acceptable European protestants to emigrate directly to Virginia. His proposed enticement was an exemption from parochial tithes, and he indicated that petitions to this effect would be presented to the assembly during the present session.[1]

Two weeks later "Philo Bombastia" wrote the editor of the Gazette repeating the economic advantages of encouraging immigration of protestant dissenters, stating that toleration was the method necessary to induce them to come to Virginia, and adding that this toleration must extend to politics, so that protestant dissenters could be admitted to public office on an equal footing with members of the established church. After all, dissenters "love to go a Colonelling as much as any People under the Sun." As if this were not sufficiently radical for Virginia readers, "Philo Bombastia" then suggested that this toleration be further extended to include Roman Catholics, who were as hard-working and ambitious for office in church and state as any people, and who could indeed colonize the area west to the Mississippi for Virginia. In a final burst of brotherhood, "Philo Bombastia" stated

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[1] Letter to editor from "Philo Virginia," (Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 5 March 1752. See also "The Virginia Gazette," Journal of Presbyterian History, XLI (September 1963), pp. 188-192. This letter was probably placed in the paper by one of the authors of the bill to be introduced.

> It is therefore humbly submitted to the Legislature, whether the passing an Act to admit all Persons of all Nations and Opinions, from all Parts of the World, to be naturalized and tolerated, and to enjoy any Office in Church, or State, throughout the Colony of Virginia, and to set all Slaves free in this Country of Liberty, would not be for the publick Utility?--'Tis probable some Petitions may be presented for this Purpose, and this is only intended to introduce them.[1]

While these proposals seem only reasonable to the modern reader, the appeal in behalf of the civil rights of Catholics and Negroes, and the flippant language in which they were couched can only indicate that they were introduced as hyperbole to point out what Bombastia himself found ridiculous in the milder proposals of "Philo Virginia."

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[1] Letter to the editor from "Philo Bombastia," (Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 20 March 1752.

"Philo Virginia's" proposals were introduced to the assembly on 31 March in a bill entitled "For encouraging Persons to settle on the Waters of MISSISSIPPI."[1] New settlers in this area would provide a buffer against the Indians, and against the French who were then moving into the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. The device presented in this bill to attract the desired settlers and one which would appeal especially to dissenters, was an exemption from county and parish taxes for a ten-year period.[2] On April first the bill was read a second time and ordered engrossed.[3]

Two days later in the Virginia Gazette there appeared a strong anti-clerical "speech" by one "Tom Telltruthia" directed to the Speaker of the House of Burgesses, in which he urged, among other religious matters, that toleration not be extended. Each state, he believed, has an internal weakness: villainage in England, clanship in Scotland, and slavery in Virginia. Since they are already burdened with one serious weakness, Virginians should leave another one, sectarianism, to Pennsylvania. The examples of Presbyterian preachers already sent from that colony should satisfy Virginians that they want no more. Referring directly to Davies, the writer said, "Nor has he ever been remarked by one Person of Taste and Knowledge, for any Thing extraordinary, but the wasted Length of his Harangues, a certain enthusiastic Heat . . . and an immense Quantity of exuberant Matter, with which he continually loads the Press." And finally,

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[1] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 31 March 1752, p. 68.

[2] Hening, Statutes, VI, 258.

[3] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 1 April 1752, p. 70.

> With Regard to Toleration I propose, that Care be taken, that we have not a Bit more of it than is unavoidably pinned down upon us by Act of Parliament, which may happen to be full enough, if not too much; for it is possible, that in this Point the interest of the Mother may run counter to that of the Daughter.[1]

Telltruthia's warning against admitting so many Pennsylvania sectarians was ignored, for that very day the House read the bill a third time and passed it.

Before Council and Governor had registered their approval of this bill another article appeared in the Gazette, a "speech" by "Peter Limits," objecting to the introduction of dissenters to promote western expansion on the grounds that this would place these people in an area where their chief contacts and influence would be French. Furthermore, Virginia would have the obligation of defending them in time of war, but their great distance could overextend supply lines.[2] Peter Limits was tardy in expressing his sentiments on admitting dissenters, for on 6 April Council had sent word to the House that it agreed to the bill, though presumably with amendments, for on the day

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[1] Speech of Tom Telltruthia, (Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 3 April 1752.

[2] Speech of Peter Limits, (Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 10 April 1752.

Peter Limit's letter appeared, the House accepted the Council amendments.[1]

The exemption from tithes provided in the act meant that the parochial structure, which was the backbone of the Virginia church, could not be successfully planted west of the mountains. Although the implications of this "extended toleration" were discussed in the newspaper, the House and Council journals indicate neither sponsor, nor committee changes, nor the vote. Strong economic motivation to pass this bill may have existed in the House. The most important of several companies founded to exploit these lands was the Ohio Company, a majority of whose members were also members of the House of Burgesses. By terms of the royal patent, the increase of the company's grant from 200,000 to 500,000 acres depended directly on the settlement of the original 200,000 acre grant.[2] And, of course, the concept of a settled west as a buffer between the French and Indians and the Tidewater settlers cannot be discounted as a factor in making such a bill attractive to most Burgesses.

This bill, which Governor Dinwiddie signed on 20 April, allowed dissenters greater financial and organizational opportunities than before. It was not, however, a toleration bill and did little to clarify relations between dissenters and the government. That matter was still much in the public mind, particularly in reference to the New Side Presbyterians in the Hanover area, and no one was more concerned than the Commissary. The day after the House and Council agreed on the western settlement bill, he presented to the Council a bill entitled "An Act for allowing his Majesty's Protestant Subjects dissenting from the Church of England the Exercise of their Religion."[1] No copy of this bill, which Dawson probably drew himself, exists, but from his correspondence with the Bishop of London we can surmise its contents. Dawson had been very unhappy that Davies had been permitted to preach in several counties and admitted that "to put them [dissenting teachers] under due Restraint is the real Intent of the Bill."[2] His bill probably followed the pattern of the 1689 English act but specified who was to license a dissenting minister and that he was restricted in geographical area. Although the Council on 11 April had ordered a second reading of Dawson's bill, in private discussion the councillors seem to have agreed to send the bill to the Bishop of London before the second reading, for him to determine whether a dissenting minister should be limited to the area of a parish as was his counterpart in the established church. In the unhappy, but likely, event that the bishop should think it necessary to insert in this bill the clause in the act of 10th Queen Anne which permitted dissenting ministers in England to officiate in a county other than the one in which he was qualified,[1] Dawson hoped "a Proviso might be added, That there be a settled Teacher of such Congregations; otherwise, as I apprehend, one Teacher may and w^{d} ramble all over a Country, and the Evil Grievance complained of w^{d} not be redressed;remedied."[2]

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[1] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 10 April 1752, p. 83.

[2] Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 571, 578-579.

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[1] H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), Legislative Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, 3 vols. (Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1918), 11 April 1752, II, 1078.

[2] William Dawson to the Bishop of London, 17 June 1752, Virginia Dawson Papers.

We have little record of the public or private reaction to the commissary's toleration bill aside from a short piece of satirical verse in the Gazette. Purportedly by a Scottish Presbyterian New Light preacher, it threatened to seek action in England if he were not given freedom to preach anywhere in the colony:

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[1] The clause referred to stated that any preacher or teacher qualified according to "An act for exempting their Majesties protestant subjects, dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws," "shall be and is hereby allowed to officiate in any congregation, although the same be not in the county wherein he was so qualified; provided that the said congregation, or place of meeting hath been before such officiating, duly certified and registered or recorded according to the said act: and such preacher or teacher, shall, if required, produce a certificate of his having so qualified himself, under the hand of the clerk of the peace for the county or place where he so qualified himself, which certificate such clerk of the peace is hereby required to make; and shall also before any justice of the peace of such county or place where he shall so officiate, make, and subscribe such declaration, and take such oaths as are mentioned in the said act, if thereunto required. Pickering, Statutes, p. 278.

[2] Dawson to the Bishop of London, 17 June 1752.

> So to be short, if You deny my Request I will write
> to the King how guilty you are of Persecution.
> And then you shall quickly see, to Your Cost, how my
> great Friend will bring about strange Revolution.[1]

After the Council completed its legislative business, it turned to executive matters, and on 22 April 1752 granted the petition of Davies to license John Todd as his assistant.[2] In 1748 the Council, sitting as the General Court, had refused arbitrarily to license John Rodgers for the same purpose. The reasons for the reversal are not clear. It is possible that the Council had now adopted the position that Presbyterians who conformed to the Anglican concept of a settled minister for a particular territory should be tolerated; on the other hand, they may have issued the license hoping that this would quiet the Presbyterians in the east temporarily, and to compensate for the exemption from tithes granted Presbyterians in the west by virtue of the newly-passed legislation.

At the same time Davies sponsored the application of the New Kent dissenters for a "license of the place" according to the form suggested by Philip Doddridge in his letter the preceding year.[3] Before the General Court even met, however,

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[1] "Petition of William Woe," Virginia Gazette, 17 April 1752. We have no reaction of Davies to this proposed measure, if he knew about it, because John Holt, whose letters from Davies are the only large body of the minister's correspondence that survives, was in England that spring and Davies did not write to him then.

[2] Executive Journals of the Council, V, 385.

[3] See Supra, pp. 101-102.

Benjamin Waller, clerk of the Court, showed this model petition to Governor Dinwiddie and several councillors in Davies' presence. These officials stated that they would not consider this application or any similar petition until they had received specific instructions from England.[1] Following the refusal of this license, Dinwiddie, in a private conference with Davies, expressed the belief that Davies could not discharge his ministerial duties properly while attempting to oversee so many congregations.[2] This attitude must have shocked Davies, who had expected considerable sympathy from the new Scottish governor.[3] Davies, however, had not reckoned on Dinwiddie's passionate attachment to British models; to this dedicated imperial servant, colonial practices which differed from those of the mother country were "as the sin of witchcraft."[4]

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[1] Davies to Benjamin Avery, 21 May 1752. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 210.

[2] Dinwiddie to Bishop of London, 5 June 1752. Perry, Historical Collections, I, 395-396.

[3] Just a month earlier Davies had written to Jonathan Edwards of Dinwiddie, "And as he has been educated in the Church of Scotland, he has a respect for the Presbyterians; which I hope is a happy omen." Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 220. When Davies attempted to identify with Dinwiddie's upbringing in the Presbyterian Church, the governor cut him short by stating that the Scottish kirk did not permit plural benefices, and suggested that Davies limit himself to one meeting house or one county. Dinwiddie to Bishop of London, 5 June 1752. Perry, Historical Collections, I, 396.

[4] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 261.

Early in May 1752 Davies received a letter from Dr. Benjamin Avery informing him of the death of Doddridge, but written before the Dissenting Deputies Committee decision against sending Davies' long letter to the bishop. Doddridge had earlier expressed the opinion that a refusal of the Council to license meeting houses according to the model petition employed in England would constitute grounds for Davies to take the case to an English court. On 21 May Davies wrote Avery asking that he take over Doddridge's former role as intermediary for papers relating to the affairs of Virginia dissenters, with authority to correct or suppress what he felt best. He placed the prosecution of this latest rebuke from the General Court in the hands of Avery and the Committee of Dissenting Deputies, with the reminder "that we are not asking a favour of the Government, but entering a legal claim." If competent authority decides the act of toleration does not permit the license of houses for occasional worship, the dissenters will withdraw their claim until a time favorable for a petition for the enlargement of their liberties. Davies left it up to the committee to decide whether to take the case to lawyers, judges, or the king in council, but he personally believed that the letter would be most respected in Virginia.

> All the order we desire is this, that wherever ten or fifteen families of Protestant dissenters, who cannot attend at the meeting-house already licensed, apply for licenses at the General Court, they shall be granted them.[1]

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[1] Davies to Benjamin Avery, 21 May 1752. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 210.

Finally, Davies enclosed a copy of his letter on the State of Religion which Bellamy had printed, and then sought Avery's advice on whether he should appeal to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in the hope that their espousal of his cause would convince Virginians that he was a legitimate Presbyterian, and not a member of an unrecognized sect.[1]

The Anglicans, on their part, hastened to inform the Bishop of London of the latest developments in the licensing controversy. On 5 June Governor Dinwiddie wrote the bishop of his encounter with Davies over the refusal to license the New Kent meeting house. Two weeks later Commissary Dawson wrote Sherlock, enclosing copies of Davies' letters to him, his petition to the governor and council for the new meeting house, and a lengthy manuscript booklet which criticized nearly every point of Davies' argument for a broader interpretation of the Toleration Act.[2]

This letter contained the summation of Dawson's thinking on the subject of dissent in the colony, and, the representation to the governor and council which he included in the body of the bishop's letter was probably his final pronouncement on the subject, for a month later Dawson was dead. In his representation, he severely criticized the dissenters' practice of itinerating on the grounds that the scattered congregations so rarely heard the minister that his services to them as a preacher, counselor, spiritual guide, and source of charity were negligible. He hastened to add that he did not oppose a legal indulgence, which to him was "a Teacher's Settlement within the limits of a parish and a License to have as many Meeting houses, as the convenience of the people within the said limits may require." To ask for more than this, as he believed Davies had, was to request favors from the government. Dawson therefore had brought in the bill allowing the government to act to restrain the dissenting teachers within the bounds of a parish.[1] In his discussion of the toleration bill which he had presented to Council in April and sought the bishop's opinion on, Dawson indicated hope that it would be introduced in the fall session of the House. As a means of countering the effect of the bill recently passed which exempted western settlers from parish taxes, this new measure included a proviso that the dissenters were in no way released from the payment of tithes.[2]

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[1] Ibid. The argument that Davies was not a true Presbyterian had been presented by the Rev. John Thomson to Patrick Henry, who eagerly spread the notion among Virginians.

[2] "Observations on Mr. Samuel Davies, his Letter, etc.," unsigned MS, Virginia Religious Papers, Library of Congress. This anonymous manuscript, like the letters of "Bombastia," "Telltruthia," and "Peter Limits," was probably written at the time of the controversy over the passage of the act to extend toleration to protestant dissenters in March and April, 1752.

Dawson confided in the bishop that Davies had "in Truth occasioned a great deal of uneasiness to the Government." So great indeed was his own fear of the dissenters that he suspected they would attempt to secure a royal repeal of the proposed bill if it should be enacted.[1] That was one legal battle the dissenters did not have to fight however. The second session of the 1752 assembly, at which the bill was to have been presented, was prorogued for various reasons from October 1752 until November 1753. The proposed bill was never presented, perhaps because by this time the Burgesses were too occupied with impending war with France, and in legal squabbles with Dinwiddie.[2]

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

A month after writing this letter William Dawson died. At the recommendation of Governor Dinwiddie and Councillor John Blair, Bishop Sherlock appointed Thomas Dawson to succeed his older brother as commissary, but did not give him a regular commission such as his predecessors had, so that the new commissary had very few powers.[3]

Shortly thereafter, perhaps early in 1753, Davies received a reply to the letter he had written Benjamin Avery in May 1752 requesting advice on the prosecution of the dissenters' case in England. Avery informed Davies of the reasons he and the committee had withheld his long letter to Bishop Sherlock, and in reply to Davies' request about an appeal for support from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Avery felt that this would serve no purpose. In regard to the licensing question, Avery wrote that the judges of the Quarter Session in England would not dare refuse a license for a meeting house if request were made on the form rejected by the Virginia General Court in April 1752; if the petition were refused, appeal could be made to a higher bench to force the clerk of the peace or an official of the ecclesiastical court to grant the license. Avery did not know what sort of appeal the dissenters could make in a Virginia court, but he knew they could appeal to the king and council England, although the process was exceedingly slow.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Preface," Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1752-1755, p. xvi.

[3] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 270-273.

Finally, Avery enclosed the opinion he had sought from Sir Dudley Ryder, the Attorney General, which agreed with other eminent lawyers he had consulted, in the hope that this would convince the governor and council to grant the licenses for more meeting houses.[1] We have no copy of Ryder's opinion, but it is obvious from Avery's letter that the attorney general agreed with the viewpoint that the Dissenting Deputies had presented to Davies from the beginning: that according to the interpretation of the Toleration Act in England, the dissenters could ask for, and be granted, as many meeting houses as they wished, without designating a minister for each. Ryder believed that this interpretation extended to Virginia.

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[1] Benjamin Avery to Davies (____ . ____) 1752. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 212-214.

Acting on the advice of Avery, and armed with Sir Dudley Ryder's favorable opinion, Davies once again appeared before the Council in June 1753 seeking a license for the meeting house in New Kent County. Once again the council refused. Davies produced the opinion, but even this did not persuade the gentlemen of the council. Thomas Dawson wrote his bishop of the confrontation, and sent him a copy of Ryder's opinion. Dawson felt that the opinion considered only a part of the original act, and that out of context, so that in effect, he refused to accept it. He reminded the bishop that the Virginians were anticipating his lordship's opinion on the issue of a plurality of congregations for a dissenting minister before the assembly should meet, because at this time the bill to restrain dissenters, mentioned by William Dawson earlier, was still to be presented. He assured Sherlock that

> The Gov^{r}. shews these teachers no countenance & your Lordship may be assured that I shall use my best, tho' weak, endeavours to restrain them, but I am afraid notwithstanding our utmost care, that these ignes fatui will lead many especially the lowest & most ignorant sort to ruin & destruction.[1]

Dawson also alerted the bishop to the fact that Davies planned to visit England that very summer, for reasons unknown to Dawson.

Davies was embarking on this trip to Britain with Gilbert Tennent at the behest of the Synod of New York in order to raise funds for the infant College of New Jersey. The opportunity that this trip provided "to make some attempts for the security and enlargement of the privileges of the dissenters in Virginia" did not escape Davies. He felt that the latest rebuff by the General Court made this journey a necessity, although his own congregation could never have afforded it, and he had high hopes that his influence, when added to that of Tennent, would produce beneficial results for the Virginians as well as the new college.[1] Before his departure Davies discussed the legal aspects of the dissenters' problem with a leading New York attorney, William Smith, who believed that the General Court's reversal of the New Kent county court order for the license was sufficient grounds for complaint in England.[2]

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[1] Thomas Dawson to Bishop of London, 23 July 1753. Perry, Historical Collections, I, 407.

The two ministers arrived in London on Christmas Day in 1753 and soon became familiar with many of the leading English dissenting ministers. Davies was much impressed by both Benjamin Avery and Jasper Maudit, and found the latter "a hearty friend of the dissenters in Virginia," who was particularly encouraging about doing something in their behalf while Davies was in England.[3]

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[1] "Journal of Rev. Samuel Davies from July 2, 1753 to February 13, 1755." Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 270.

[2] Ibid., 28 September 1753, p. 234. The Honorable William Smith (1728-1793) was admitted to the New York bar in 1750 as a partner of William Livingston with whom he published the Laws of New York from the Year 1691 to 1751, Inclusive in 1752. He later became a historian of note, and was throughout his life a leading figure in the Presbyterian church. Dictionary of American Biography, IX, 357.

[3] Davies' Journal, 5 January, 19 January, 27 January 1754. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 245, 248, 250.

At their January meeting the Committee of Dissenting Deputies considered the plan for the college, and at their meeting on 27 February they devoted themselves to the problem of the Virginia dissenters. When Davies arrived, the committee, which had spent the morning consulting Virginia laws and reading the papers he had sent them, informed him "they were apprehensive that the Act of Toleration was not so adopted as to become a proper law of Virginia, but only one paragraph was received, which exempts dissenters from penalty for absenting themselves from the established church." Davies was disheartened by this opinion and still disagreed with it. The committee advised him to present a petition to the King and Privy Council signed by dissenters in the frontier counties rather than by Hanoverians, because the others were "educated dissenters, and were a good barrier against the French and Indians."[1] Davies agreed to accept this advice. However, the decision must have been discouraging to the young minister, for in essence the Dissenting Deputies agreed with the Virginia assembly which had already recognized the rights of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians on the frontier when it exempted them from tithes in 1752 and 1753. The committee's advice to exclude the Hanover dissenters from the petition struck a sharp blow at one liberty dear to Davies--the right of an individual to dissent peaceably from the church in which he had been raised, according to the dictates of his conscience.

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[1] Ibid., 27 February 1754, p. 255.

Davies did not abandon hope, but he noted gloomily in his diary the following week that "Peyton Randolph, Esq., my old adversary, is now in London; and will no doubt oppose whatever is done in favor of the dissenters in Hanover."[1]

Davies drew up the proposed petition and gave it to Avery to correct. The committee, however, felt this was a poor time to present such a petition to the king because of the considerable confusion in the government in England, in Virginia, and in the church. The sudden death of the Prime Minister, Henry Pelham, had thrown the home government into confusion. In Virginia the House of Burgesses and Governor Dinwiddie were embroiled in a dispute over the governor's attempt to charge a fee of one pistole for the use of the required royal seal on the hundreds of land patents waiting to be processed. The Burgesses had appointed Peyton Randolph to go to England as their agent, bearing an address to the Crown against the governor, upon which Dinwiddie dismissed him as Attorney General, and prorogued the assembly.[2]

The Committee of Dissenting Deputies may well have been wise in advising Davies not to confuse relations between the Crown and Virginia any further at this time by the injection of the religious issue. Dinwiddie had demonstrated no particular animosity to the dissenters, but he was supported in this pistole fee controversy by the Council which had persistently thwarted Davies' efforts to get more meeting houses licensed. If the King and Council should decide to support Dinwiddie and the Virginia Council in the pistole fee quarrel, they could well decide to support the same councillors in their opposition to the dissenters. An adverse decision from the King and Council to the dissenters' petition would quash all hopes of expanding religious toleration in Virginia for many years. On the other hand, the same effect might be achieved if the King and Council supported the Burgesses, for their advocate was Peyton Randolph, the dissenters' most ardent opponent in the Virginia government, and he could use his influence to the detriment of the dissenters' case.

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[1] Ibid., 4 March 1754, p. 256.

[2] Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 621-630.

In spite of these exigencies, Davies had no intention of abandoning the effort to secure broader toleration for the dissenters. He placed great faith in the promise of Dr. Stennet, a leading Baptist minister, to exercise "his utmost influence in their favour" at court.[1] In early April he sent the completed petition to Virginia for the dissenters' signatures. It was then to be returned to England for presentation to the King in Council. In Scotland, where Davies and Tennent journeyed for the meeting of the General Assembly of the Church, Davies solicited the sympathy and support of several leading Presbyterians on behalf of the Virginia dissenters.[1] Within two weeks the petition from Virginia was returned, and just before his departure for home, Davies showed it to Stennet, then gave it to Avery and Maudit of the Committee of Dissenting Deputies. He left to the committee the decision as to whether to present the petition to the king, or seek licenses from the bishop's court. Secretly he felt that Stennet's efforts would produce better results than those of the committee, as the majority of the latter oppose the evangelical movement and

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[1] Davies' Journal, 16 March 1754. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 257.

> cannot look upon the dissenting interest in Virginia, as a religious interest, because founded on principles which they disapprove; and therefore they can only espouse it, as the cause of liberty: but a zeal for it in this view, is not so vigorous a principle as the other.[3]

Unfortunately, available records give no indication of the outcome of the dissenters' case in England. Nonetheless, a more permissive policy towards dissenters was achieved in Virginia after 1755, although less from Davies' dedicated efforts in England than from a fortuitous combination of outside circumstances. By the time Davies returned to the colony in February 1755, Dinwiddie and the Assembly were too occupied with problems of defense against the French and Indians to bother with complaints of dissenters.[1] But by this time these complaints had also considerably diminished. Four more Synod of New York ministers had settled in Virginia while Davies was in Britain: Alexander Craighead and John Brown in the Shenandoah Valley, and Robert Henry and John Wright in Cumberland and Prince Edward Counties in the south.[2] Now that these four, as well as Davies and Todd, were settled in different areas of the colony and tending to the few congregations in their immediate vicinity, the commissary and clergy of the established church could no longer level charges of itinerating against dissenting ministers. In effect, the Presbyterians were now complying with former Commissary William Dawson's conception of a "reasonable Indulgence."

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[1] *Ibid.*, 7 April, 10 June, 5 July 1754, pp. 258, 262, 264.

[2] *Ibid.*, 20 October 1754, p. 275.

[3] *Ibid.*, 18 November 1754, pp. 275-276.

Two other factors probably influenced the relaxation of official hostility towards the dissenters. It was the Presbyterian settlers in the Valley who had been encouraged to settle by exemption from tithes who were bearing the brunt of Indian raids on the frontier. This generated considerable sympathy for them from the government and from all Virginians.[3] And finally, Davies himself became one of the government's most effective recruiting officers. He preached a series of patriotic sermons designed to raise several militia companies and inspire them to fight for their colony. These were printed and probably received a wide circulation throughout Virginia.[1]

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[1] Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 635-638.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 283-284.

[3] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," p. 208; Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 675-590.

The toleration question as it concerned the Governor, Council, Burgesses, Commissary and clergy of Virginia and the dissenting ministers in the colony and in England between 1745 and 1755 was not really solved: it merely disappeared. For the fifteen years to 1770, the issue of extended toleration was seldom raised in Virginia, by either the established church or the Presbyterian dissenters. A settlement reasonably satisfactory to all parties concerned had simply appeared, and it was not questioned. It was not until the appearance of the Baptists in the colony in the years immediately preceding the Revolution that the questions of toleration and the civil rights of dissenters once again became political issues in the Old Dominion, and it was not until after the Revolution that the problem of toleration was finally settled by act of legislature.

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[1] The titles of some of these patriotic sermons include: Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier, The Curse of Cowardice, The Crisis; or, the Uncertain Doom of Kingdoms at Particular Times, Serious Reflections on War, and On the Defeat of General Braddock.

IV. THE VIRGINIA CAREER OF SAMUEL DAVIES

Samuel Davies, the talented young man who contributed much to Presbyterianism in Virginia, was born on 3 November 1723 on the Welsh Tract near Summit Ridge in Newcastle County, Delaware. His father, David Davies, was a farmer of Welsh extraction and his mother a pious woman with a stubborn and independent mind. As the child of her prayers, his mother named him Samuel, and undertook his early education herself. He was a serious youngster, and at the age of ten the family placed him under the tutelage of a Baptist minister in the neighborhood, one Abel Morgan.[1]

Young Davies did not come by his Presbyterianism by birth, for the family belonged to the Baptist congregation. His mother, however, began to attend the preaching of Presbyterian ministers in the area and to criticize the Baptists. These activities led to expulsion from her Baptist congregation and subsequent affiliation with the Presbyterians.[1] Samuel, who had received "impressions of a religious nature" at the age of twelve, three years later made a public profession of faith and joined St. George's Presbyterian church.[2] When the time came for Davies to leave home to continue his education, his parents chose the small seminary lately opened at New Londonderry (Fagg's Manor) in Chester County, Pennsylvania, by Samuel Blair.[3]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 157-158. In a letter to Thomas Gibbons of London, Davies once wrote of his mother that she was "one of the most eminent Saints he ever knew upon Earth." He revealed that "I am a Son of Prayer, like my Namesake Samuel the Prophet;" Thomas Gibbons, Divine Conduct Vindicated, or the Operations of Wisdom: . . . Two Discourses . . . Occasioned by the Decease of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Davies. . . . (London: J. Buckland, 1761), pp. 4-5.

Blair had been educated for the ministry by William Tennent at the Log College, and became, along with Gilbert Tennent, one of the most ardent preachers of the Great Awakening. As a student at Fagg's Manor, Davies (along with his close friends Samuel Finley and John Rodgers) absorbed the theological principles and preaching techniques of the New Lights and received an excellent classical education. Davies, later expressing his regard for his teacher in a poem written upon receipt of news of Blair's mortal illness called him

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[1] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," pp. 6-8.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 158; ibid., p. 10; it is possible that Davies was exposed to Whitefield's preaching when the revivalist toured through Pennsylvania and Delaware in 1740, for the journals indicate that thousands in the area heard him. George Whitefield's Journals (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), Sixth Journal, January 1740-June 1740, pp. 411-424.

[3] Blair (1712-1751) was born in Ulster and emigrated early to America. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1733 and served two congregations in New Jersey. In 1738 he was instrumental in organizing the Presbytery of New Brunswick. The following year he began work at New Londonderry and was installed in 1740. "Samuel Blair," DAB, I, 340-341.

My Father! Tutor! Friend! each tender Name,
That can the softest, tend'rest Passions claim!
My faithful Guide to Science and to Truth,
In the raw Years of unexperienc'd Youth.[1]

Legend says that Davies' education at Fagg's Manor was paid for by the evangelist William Robinson from the money given him by the Hanover dissenters when he preached there, and if true, this may have influenced the presbytery to send him rather than another of the possible candidates to Virginia.[2] He probably completed his studies in the spring of 1746, for Newcastle Presbytery licensed him on July 30 that year. In October he married Sara Kirkpatrick, and in February 1747 was ordained as an evangelist for Virginia. Immediately after his spring preaching tour in Virginia, the Hanover Presbyterians sent a call for him to the presbytery. In September his young wife died in childbirth. His own poor health improved by spring, and in May 1748, with no ties to hold him in Delaware, Davies settled in Hanover County, Virginia.[3]

It seems likely that Davies devoted most of this first year to organizing the various dissenter groups in the Hanover area. The trials of the dissenters before the General Court were settled at the time of his arrival, and with no further legal action threatening them, the Presbyterians could concentrate on consolidation. In addition to the three meeting houses in Hanover and one in Henrico which had been licensed in April 1747, congregations in four other locations were organized under Davies' guidance, and in October 1748 their application to the General Court for license was approved.[1]

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[1] Davies, The State of Religion among the Dissenters in Virginia, p. 32.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 129, 159. Also letter of Jonathan Edwards, 23 May 1749 notes that Davies received Robinson's library when that man died. Ibid., p. 172.

[3] Aliquis, "Biographical Sketch of President Davies," The Presbyterian Magazine, III (December 1853), p. 571; Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 20.

Davies now had his hands full with seven meeting houses spread over a ninety-mile circumference in Hanover, Henrico, Caroline, Louisa, and Goochland counties. The task of travelling from one meeting house to another on weekdays as well as Sundays in order to meet with his parishioners required considerable physical exertion, particularly for someone who had suffered from consumption in preceding years.[2] But Davies thrived on the effort, and his congregations grew steadily. We do not know how many were numbered among the dissenters when he arrived, but by 1751 Davies could count about three hundred communicants in his congregation "who make an external Profession of real Religion."[3] This included "50 or 60 families, who have thus been happily intangled in the Net of the Gospel by their own Curiosity, or some such Motive, since my coming here."[1]

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[1] General Court order (copy) 1 November 1748. Fulham Palace Papers. Virginia Vol. XIII, p. 9. Library of Congress microfilm.

[2] Davies to the Bishop of London, 10 January 1752. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 192.

[3] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 23.

In addition to those who had formally united with the Presbyterian church, hundreds of others crowded into the meeting houses to hear this young preacher from the north. At some of the houses, such as that of Thomas Watkins in Henrico and John Sutton in Caroline, where there were not more than twenty families who were Presbyterian, four to five hundred "and sometimes twice that number" appeared as listeners, "the Church-People in general being very eager to hear" according to Davies. He felt that many more of these Anglicans would join with him out of conviction if it were not for the stigma attached to becoming a New Light.[2] Within a year of the time Davies settled in Virginia, Jonathan Edwards, wrote a friend that "I heard lately of a credible account of a remarkable work of conviction and conversion among whites and negroes, at Hanover, Virginia, under the ministry of Mr. Davies, who is lately settled there, and has the character of a very ingenious and pious young man."[3] In early 1753 Davies wrote his brother-in-law that five or six hundred belonged to his congregation.[4]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 22-23. [2] Ibid., p. 22.

[3] Jonathan Edwards to _______, 23 May 1749. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 172.

[4] Davies to John Holt, 27 February 1753. Benjamin Rush Correspondence, Vol. XXIV, Library Company of Philadelphia.

The success of his efforts in the Hanover area was due in large part to his own personality and to his attitude towards his mission. Davies prided himself on the fact that those of his followers who left the established church to become Presbyterians were led to do so by the spiritual content of his sermons rather than by denunciatory attacks on the clergy and practices of the Anglican church. To the Bishop of London he wrote, "I defy the world to confute me, that in all the sermons I have preached in Virginia, I have not wasted one minute in exclaiming or reasoning against the peculiarities of the established church."[1] To his brother-in-law, a staunch Anglican, Davies noted he had not preached publicly against the church, and that though he felt free to do so in private conversation, "yet I use my Influence rather to enlarge their Charity, than enflame a bigotted zeal ag^{t} these Things."[2]

Nonetheless, Davies was convinced that

> Religion has been, and in most Parts of the Colony still is, in a very low State. A surprizing Negligence appears in attending on publick Worship; and an equally surprizing Levity & Unconcernedness in those that attend. Family-Religion is a Rarity, and a solemn Solicitude about eternal Things is still a greater. Vices of various Kinds are triumphant, and even a Form of Godliness is not common.[3]

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[1] Davies to Bishop of London, 10 January 1752, Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 194.

[2] Davies to John Holt, 27 February 1753, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, Vol. XXIV.

[3] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 4.

However, Davies' chief quarrel with the established church rested on what he diagnosed as a dearth of preaching meaningful doctrine. He felt that the particular doctrines preached in Virginia "are not the whole Gospel of Christ; that there is very little Prospect of their success in the Conversion & Sanctification of Men."[1] According to his own observation, "the Clergy universally . . . have embraced the modish System of Arminian Divinity . . . and the Calvinistic, or rather PAULINE Articles of their own Church are counted horrendous and insufferable."[2] He was firmly persuaded "that another Method of Preaching must prevail before a general Reformation can be expected. . . ."[3]

Davies conceived of his work as an antidote to spiritual deadness. His mission was "to preach repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ--To alarm secure impenitents; to reform the profligate; to undeceive the hypocrite; to raise up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble knees."[4]

He set out to preach precisely that message of repentance and faith in the hopes of raising the Virginians from their lethargy. The method he chose, however, was a calm and deliberate one. He wisely judged that "fiery, superficial ministers will never do in these parts; they might do good, but they would do much more hurt. . . . The enemies are watchful, and some of them crafty, and raise a prodigious clamor about raving, injudicious preaching."[1] Consequently, Davies prepared his sermons with care and delivered them in a calm but convincing manner, filled with warmth and dignity. His method was one of direct appeal in the second person, in a manner frequently employed by the New Light revivalists.[2]

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[1] Davies to John Holt, 27 February 1753. Benjamin Rush Correspondence, Vol. XXIV.

[2] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, pp. 4-5.

[3] Davies to John Holt, 27 February 1753.

[4] Davies to the Bishop of London, 10 January 1752. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 194.

Davies' own commitment to experimental (or "experienced") religion convinced him that contemporary developments in theology were lacking in substance. Anglicans drew heavily on latitudinarian theologians such as John Tillotson (1630-1694), former Archbishop of Canterbury, and on Thomas Sherlock (1678-1761) Bishop of London. In Davies' view, their approach to Christianity placed undue stress on the duties of man in society to the neglect of experiencing conversion and living a vital piety. Davies did not disagree with what they said; they simply did not say enough. He confided in his brother-in-law, "If their scheme of Religion be sufficient, I am as safe as they since mine includes it; but if it should prove essentially defective, then you can see where the Advantage lies."[1]

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[1] Davies to Joseph Bellamy, 4-13 July 1751, in The Presbyterian, 6 January 1872. Presbyterian Historical Society MSS Collections, Philadelphia. Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790) was one of the leading revivalist ministers in New England, and a frequent correspondent of Davies. Bellamy had graduated from Yale in 1735. He studied theology for two years, partly with Jonathan Edwards whom he greatly admired, and was licensed to preach at the age of 18. In 1738 he settled in Bethlehem, Connecticut and remained there until his death. He was a powerful preacher, and an advocate of Edwards' New Light theology which he defended in True Religion Delineated (1750). This was popular and brought many young men to Bethlehem to study with him. "Joseph Bellamy," DAB, I, 165.

[2] Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 87.

Davies' own theological views were strongly Calvinistic. This was a result of his careful training by Blair, who was, in turn, a product of the Log College curriculum which depended heavily on English Puritan writers.[2] Davies' first printed work was "A Sermon on Man's Primitive State and the First Covenant," which contained a carefully developed explanation of the concept of the covenant which was so basic to American Calvinist thinking.[3] Throughout his sermons Davies stressed the innate depravity of man as a result of Adam's sin, and man's inability to change his own condition save through response to exhortations of repentance.[1] Time and again in his sermons he warned of the necessity of a genuine act of repentance and complete submission to the mercy of God as the essential steps toward salvation.[2] The very shortness of life and the ever-present possibility of death, a matter of lesser concern to modern man than to his eighteenth-century ancestors, was a recurring theme which Davies urged on his hearers as added incentive to repent and reform.[3]

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[1] Davies to John Holt, 12 September 1751. Benjamin Rush Correspondence, XXIV. Davies firmly denied that "being judged according to our works and for our works is the same." In an unpublished essay, "Remarks on the VIII, Ch. of Dr. Sherlock's Discourse on Judgements" (Library Company of Philadelphia) he maintained that the righteousness of the Christian comes not from his good works, but only from Christ's righteousness. Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," p. 68.

[2] Trinterud, Forming of an American Tradition, pp. 54-58.

[3] Samuel Davies, A Sermon on Man's Primitive State and the First Covenant, Delivered before the Reverend Presbytery of Newcastle, April 13, 1748. (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1748). This sermon was preached immediately before Davies departed for Virginia to take up permanent residence in Hanover County.

In spite of the strongly Calvinistic, or as Davies preferred, Pauline, emphasis of his preaching, he avoided as much as possible the one doctrine most closely associated with Calvin--predestination. His mentor, Blair, was a firm believer in the doctrine, and it would have been surprising to find Davies denying it.[4] Although Davies' biographer, Bost, indicates that Davies never mentioned the subject and seemed to imply that God would save all true penitents, we know that

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[1] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," p. 243.

[2] See for example his sermons, "The Nature and Necessity of True Repentance," "The Doom of the Incorrigible Sinner," and "The Success of the Gospel by the Divine Power upon the Souls of Men," in Albert Barnes (ed.), Sermons on Important Subjects by the Reverend Samuel Davies, A.M., 3 vols. (New York: Dayton and Saxon, 1841), passim.

[3] This theme is especially strong in his sermons "Indifference to Life Urged from Its Shortness and Vanity," "A Time of Unusual Sickness and Mortality Improved," "The Certainty of Death," and "Life and Immortality Revealed in the Gospel," ibid.

[4] Blair published a sermon entitled "The Doctrine of Predestination truly and fairly stated; confirmed from clear Scripture Evidence; and Defended against all Material Arguments and Objections advanced against it . . . ." reprinted in Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, IX (December 1837), pp. 536-537.

Davies did preach on predestination, for he sent John Holt "the Skeleton of 2 Sermons on Predestination, the only ones that I ever preached in Virginia on y^t tremendous unpopular Subject."[1] Davies' avoidance of the subject thus seems to have been calculating rather than doctrinal: he could achieve greater success in winning Virginians to the gospel by emphasizing other aspects of it, and this was precisely what he did.

Anglican theology of the period was much concerned with the preaching of virtuous living and proper social conduct.[2] Davies was no less concerned with these things, but he approached them from the Calvinist notion that a true religious experience or regeneration produces a change of heart which manifests itself in virtuous living.[3] On several occasions Davies explained to Virginians his understanding of Christian living. The first duty of the Christian was the love of God, and the second the love of man. He urged on his people the "Rule of Equity" or Golden Rule which he saw as the divine guideline for the moral obligation of the Christian.[4]

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[1] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," p. 242; Davies to John Holt, 7 August 1752. Benjamin Rush Correspondence, Vol. XXIV.

[2] The tremendous popularity of The Whole Duty of Man, a handbook of virtuous Christian living, was typical of this trend.

[3] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," pp. 62-63; "The Nature and Necessity of True Repentance," Barnes, Sermons on Important Subjects, II, 300-301.

[4] "The Rule of Equity," ibid., II, 62-69.

> A Christian is a good Parent, a good Child, a good Master, a good Servant, a good Husband, a good Wife, a faithful Friend, an obliging Neighbor, a dutiful Subject, a good Ruler, a zealous Patriot, and an honest Statesman; and so far as he is such, so far and no farther, he is a Christian.[1]

The starting point for this proper living was among the family, the basic social unit instituted by God, "the nursery of church and state." The head of the family had the obligation to provide spiritually for his wife, children, and servants as well.[2] With impunity Davies attacked what he considered the most prevalent and offensive vices in Virginia: drunkenness, swearing, lying, defrauding, whoredom, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of religion, neglect of the souls of the Negroes, and extravagant gambling.[3]

In spite of such attacks, Virginians flocked to hear Davies. The human animal seems to enjoy an occasional verbal scourging, and Davies' preaching was likely the most exciting public entertainment in Virginia, for Moses Coit Tyler has suggested that he was "probably the most brilliant pulpit orator produced in the colonial time, south of New England."[4] While many of the New Lights adopted Whitefield's loose, formless, emotional style of preaching, Davies only absorbed enough of it to give fire to his delivery. This he applied to the traditional scholastic construction of sermons, consisting of a text, followed by an exegesis of the text and introduction of the sermon theme. The body of the sermon was divided into parts, each analyzed and developed, then the sermon closed with a summary or plea of the case.[1] Within this logical framework, Davies placed his compelling arguments and vivid, emotional descriptions, then delivered them with great skill and dignity. Davies' sermons were originally printed after his sudden death to raise money for his widow and five small children, and we are probably fortunate that Davies had not been able to revise and prepare them for publication, for we have them in essentially the form they were delivered. It is obvious from the vivid imagery that they were intended for the ear rather than the eye. We have few sermons preached by ministers of the established church with which to compare Davies', but we know that his message was sufficiently impressive to lure hundreds of Anglicans from the fold. And it made a lasting impression on one young man in Hanover county who heardDavies often, and who became in time one of America's outstanding orators--Patrick Henry.[2]

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[1] From "The Sacred Import of the Christian Name," quoted in Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," p. 63.

[2] "The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion," Barnes (ed.), Sermons on Important Subjects, II, 42-44.

[3] Samuel Davies, Virginia's Danger and Remedy. Two Discourses Occasioned by the Severe Drought in Sundry Parts of the Country; and the Defeat of GENERAL BRADDOCK (Williamsburg: William Hunter, 1765), p. 26.

[4] Moses Coit Tyler, A History of American Literature, 1607-1765, Complete in One Volume, with a new forward by Perry Miller (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 462.

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[1] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," pp. 232-234, 237, 248-261.

[2] Ibid. Bost feels there are many similarities in subject and style between Davies' war sermons and Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech.

The task of caring for this flock of several hundred convicted Christians spread over seven counties was too much for one man to handle. Davies had many projects to occupy his time besides the normal pastoral duties. His continual effort to secure from the courts a broader interpretation of the toleration act consumed much of his time and energy. He was now a family man, and had to think also of responsibilities at home. On October 4, 1748, the young widower had married Jane Holt, of a local family, whose brother John Holt was a Williamsburg merchant and assistant to the printer of the Virginia Gazette. In August 1749 their first son, William Davies, was born, and in September 1750 another son, Samuel.[1]

Davies longed for the companionship of another minister of similar convictions, for the only clergyman with whom he came in contact in Virginia were the generally unsympathetic Anglican parish ministers, especially his hostile neighbor, the Reverend Patrick Henry.[2] Letters from his colleagues to the north were helpful, as were the Synod meetings, but they did not compensate for weekly contact and exchange of ideas.[3]

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[1] Aliquis, "Biographical Sketch of President Davies," p. 571; "John Holt," DAB, V, 180-181.

[2] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 19.

[3] Davies to Mr. C., 7 February 1757. Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies shewing the State of Religion in Virginia, particularly among the Negroes. . . . 2nd Ed. (London: R. Pardon, 1757), p. 25, says "Virginia, was for five or six years a melancholy and laborious solitude to me, separated from my brethren, and surrounded with enemies in Church and State."

And finally, if an assistant could be secured, Davies could reduce the number of meeting houses under his care and thereby eliminate the charge that he was itinerating.[1]

As early as 1749 Davies determined to seek the assistance of another minister. He attended the Synod of New York at Maidenhead, New Jersey, in May and represented the "desolate circumstances of Virginia and Maryland." The Synod appointed James Davenport to supply in Virginia, and named a committee to write the Eastern Association of Fairfield County, Connecticut, asking them to send one or more ministers to supply in the south.[2] Apparently nothing came of these first two efforts, for Davies wrote the special meeting of the Synod commission in Trenton in October, again requesting assistance. The commission reappointed Davenport, and three others to supply in Virginia, and suggested that John Todd journey to Virginia as soon as he was licensed.[3]

By September 1750 only Davenport had fulfilled his appointment. He spent two of the summer months in Hanover and brought several people under conviction.[1] Fortunately for the Presbyterian cause in Virginia, Davenport had sobered since the early days of his revival ministry when the Connecticut General Assembly judged him mentally unbalanced for his fanatical preaching and deported him from the colony.[2]

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[1] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 22; Bishop of London to William Dawson, 25 December 1750, Dawson Papers, I.

[2] Minutes of the Synod of New York, 18 May 1749. Records of the Presbyterian Church, p. 236.

[3] Minutes of the Commissioners of the Synod of New York, 5 October 1749, ibid., p. 240.

Helpful though Davenport's visit was, Davies still needed a full-time assistant, and realizing that the Synod of New York had too many vacancies to fill, he began to look towards New England for help. In his famous letter to Joseph Bellamy, minister at Bethlehem, Connecticut, Davies mentioned this very fact "as an Inducement to faithful Ministers from New England and elsewhere, where they may be spared, to come into our Macedonia to help us."[3]

In another letter the following week to Bellamy, Davies revealed his specific plans to bring another minister to Virginia. Davies' selection was Jonathan Edwards, who recently had been relieved of his pastorate at Northampton. Davies felt that

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[1] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 28; Minutes of the Synod of New York, 28 September 1750; Records of the Presbyterian Church, p. 242.

[2] Edwin Gaustad, The Great Awakening in New England (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 37-41.

[3] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 32. Bellamy was a good object of such an appeal, for he had successfully trained young ministers at his remote parish for over ten years. He personally had studied under Edwards after his graduation from Yale, and was very enthusiastic over the New Light theology, and Davies hoped Bellamy could influence one of his young students to come to Virginia. "Joseph Bellamy," DAB, I, 165.

Edwards would suit both the dissenters who had no taste for injudicious preaching and the enemies of dissent who also objected to religious excesses. He also observed that Edwards' reputation in Great Britain would have considerable influence there to counterbalance the objections of the Virginia council to dissenters. The elders of Davies' four upper meeting houses could guarantee Edwards a yearly salary of ₤100, and other congregations could raise ₤30-40 to help him settle there. Davies sent a young man who had been studying with him to carry the invitation to Edwards, and asked Bellamy to visit the great minister in a further attempt to convince him to move to Virginia.[1] Unfortunately, Edwards had already settled in Stockbridge.

Another method of augmenting the ministry was to train ministrial candidates personally, as Bellamy was doing, and Davies undertook that project with considerable success. His commitments to seven meeting houses prevented him from operating the usual academy that so many of the colonial clergy ran to supplement their incomes. However, he did find the time to give personal direction to several young men who read theology under him.

The first young man to study under him was John Harris who carried the call of the Hanoverians to Jonathan Edwards in the summer of 1751. After completing his work with Davies, Harris became a student at Princeton, and after graduating there he joined the Presbytery of Newcastle, but did not return to his native state as a settled minister.[1] Davies' next student, Henry Patillo, had originally planned to study with Davies' old adversary John Thomson, but when illness prevented the youth from going to Pennsylvania, Davies invited him to Hanover to live with his family. He stayed until Davies departed for England in 1753, and resumed his studies when Davies returned in 1755.[2] Davies had two other students while Patillo was with him, William Richardson and John Martin. These three prepared successfully for the ministry under their capable mentor without ever having attended college. Martin completed his studies early in 1756 and was licensed by the Presbytery in August of that year. Richardson completed his studies the following year and was likewise licensed.[3]

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[1] Davies to Bellamy, 4-13 July 1751, The Presbyterian, 6 January 1872 (Presbyterian Historical Society Collections).

Davies was also instrumental in convincing at least four other young men to enter the ministry, although he did not personally train them. Two of them, David Rice and James Hunt, were sons of men who were among the original small group of Hanover Dissenters.[1] John Wright was a native Scot who lived in Virginia and who returned to the colony as a settled minister after graduating from the College of New Jersey in 1752.[2] James Waddell came to America as a child from Ulster and studied under two leading Presbyterian ministers, Samuel Finley and Robert Smith. Under Davies' influence he abandoned plans to study medicine and joined the ministry.[3]

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[1] Samuel Finley to Joseph Bellamy, 1 August 1751, quoted in Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 669-670.

[2] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 196-197; William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers (New York: R. Carter, 1846), pp. 214-217.

[3] Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 674-678.

Before any of these young men were ready to undertake parish work, Davies' long-awaited permanent assistant came in the person of John Todd, a young graduate of the College of New Jersey who first supplied in the Hanover area in May 1751. The congregations immediately sent a call for him to the New Brunswick Presbytery. This he accepted, and on 22 April 1752 the General Court licensed him to officiate in Virginia. In November of that year Davies presided at Todd's installation as pastor of Providence meeting house in Louisa County.[4] Todd's coming provided Davies with the companionship he had long sought, and furthermore enabled him to devote even more of his time to the various projects which absorbed him, including missionary work among Negroes and Indians, his literary pursuits, the toleration struggle, and the journey to Great Britain on behalf of the College of New Jersey.

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[1] Vernon P. Martin, "'Father Rice': The Preacher Who Followed the Frontier," unpublished MS, Presbyterian Historical Society, pp. 13-31.

[2] Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 624-628; Jonathan Edwards to John Erskine, 7 July 1752, quoted in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 52-53.

[3] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 235-236.

[4] Hanford A. Edson, "John Todd of Virginia and John Todd of Indiana: A Home Missionary Sketch," The Presbyterian Review, VII (January 1886), pp. 15-18.

Samuel Davies' pioneering work among the Negroes is one of the most interesting phases of his ministry.[1] The relationship of the Christian churches to the Negroes had been a thorny question from the time slavery was introduced in the colonies. Most colonists, north and south alike, believed that the Bible condoned slavery. While New Englanders saw no conflict between the Calvinist concept of election and the institution of slavery because of St. Paul's philosophy of grades and orders in society, and accepted Christianizing Negroes, some in the south went so far as to believe that the Negro was a soulless species beyond salvation. Because slavery, in this concept, was the result of sin, administering baptism, which washed away sin, would elevate the slave and absolve the slave-master relationship.[2] The Virginia Assembly of 1667 attempted to solve the dilemma by passing an act stating that administration of baptism in no way changed the status of servitude.[1] The question did not rest there, however, for in 1727 the Bishop of London had to circulate a pastoral letter, supported by opinions of the Attorney General and Solicitor General denying that baptism of slaves dissolved the relationship with the master.[2]

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[1] For an excellent account of this educational work see George W. Pilcher, "Samuel Davies and the Instruction of Negroes in Virginia," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXIV (July 1966), pp. 293-300.

[2] William Sumner Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 4-7, 17, 19-21.

Although the hierarchy of the Anglican church encouraged the Christianizing of slaves, results were left to be realized by a few interested clergymen.[3] The group known as Dr. Bray's Associates which had made a concerted effort toward evangelizing and educating Negroes had several ministers active in Virginia from 1720-1740, including one in the Hanover area in 1738.[4] The success they achieved was not spectacular if we can consider the report of the Rev. John Thompson of Orange

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 49-50; text in Hening, Statutes, II, 260.

[2] Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, pp. 19-21.

[3] In 1724 the Bishop of London circulated a questionnaire to the Virginia clergy inquiring what was being done to Christianize Indians and Negroes. This pastoral letter of 1727 urging more action spurred activity, but this was halted in 1731 by a rumor that the King had ordered baptized slaves freed but that the governor had suppressed the order. Discontented slaves in the Norfolk area attempted a rebellion but were quashed. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 47-49.

[4] Mary F. Goodwin, "Christianizing and Educating the Negro in Colonial Virginia," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, I (September 1932), pp. 148-149; Charles Bridges to Bishop of London, 20 October 1735, Fulham Palace Papers, Vol. XII, Virginia 1724-43, p. 238, Library of Congress microfilm, MSS division.

County typical. In 1743 he wrote Dr. Bray that he had baptized 298 white children and 13 Negroes.[1] Most of the slaveholders seemed to have resisted any inclination to provide significant religious instruction for their Negroes and to bring them into active church membership. In 1751 the vestry of St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania County, prohibited the minister from baptizing Negro children with white children.[2]

In contrast with the indifferent attitude towards Negroes exhibited by most slaveholders and many Anglican clergymen, Davies took an active interest in educating and Christianizing them from the time he settled in Virginia. In writing to Bellamy in 1751, Davies noted that the Negro population in the Hanover area was large, and that often a hundred or more came to hear him preach.[3] In his first three years in Virginia, he had baptized about forty Negroes who had made a credible profession of faith. He found that many slaves believed baptism made them instant Christians and could not be convinced of the necessity of catechetical instruction. For some slaves, baptism.

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[1] Goodwin, "Christianizing and Educating the Negro . . . ," pp. 145-146; List of Negroes instructed and baptized by John Garzia, Northfarnham Parish, Richmond Co., Va., under instructions by Thomas Bray, March 4, 1723/4, Fulham Palace Papers, Vol. XII, Virginia 1724-43.

[2] Carrol Quenzel, The History and Background of St. George's Episcopal Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia (published by the Vestry, 1951), p. 12.

[3] Davies, The State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, pp. 23-24.

was a fad, while others believed it would make them equal to their masters.[1] Davies wrote that

> I am afraid of discouraging them, as well as acting contrary to the Apostolic Pattern, by imposing high terms of admission to baptism; and I am cautious on the other hand of swelling the number of Proselytes with only nominal Christians, if I should reduce the terms of initiation into it, very low.[2]

Davies developed a fairly successful pattern of instruction that solved many of these problems. He insisted first that the slaves learn to read, for thus "a taste for intellectual improvement would circulate among them; and they would unavoidably come to know something of Christianity, which is the first step towards embracing it."[3] After they were able to read, Davies would present them with a testament or book of Psalms whenever possible. He then required them to undergo a period of catechetical instruction, and after they could give evidence of acquaintance with the chief doctrines of Christianity and of their sense of morality and piety, Davies would baptize the slaves.[4] Although this program placed high demands on slaves whose time for the luxury of education was limited, by early 1757 Davies had baptized a total of 150 adult Negroes and "at the last sacremental Solemnity, [I] had the pleasure of seeing the Table of the Lord graced with about 60 black Faces."[1]

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[1] Davies to the Rev. Mr. F--, 7 February 1757 in Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies &c," p. 28.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Davies to Mr. C--, 7 February 1757, ibid., p. 25.

[4] Davies to J.F., 1 April 1755; Davies to the Rev. Mr. F--, 7 February 1757, ibid., pp. 7, 31.

A large measure of the success of Davies' educational efforts can be attributed to the assistance he received from the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor, formed in London in 1750. Davies joined the group while he was in Britain, probably at the behest of his friends Thomas Gibbons and Samuel Stennett, prominent dissenting ministers who were active in the society. A chief function of the group was the distribution of thousands of testaments, Bibles, and works of leading Puritan and dissenting theologians.[2] Davies brought back with him a large supply of these books and had distributed them all within six weeks of his return. The theological treatises he gave to the poorer whites in his congregation, while the Bibles, testaments, and Hymns for Children were especially popular with the Negroes.[3] Davies requested and received more books from the society, especially spellers and Watt's Psalms for the Negroes. His work attracted the attention of John and Samuel Wesley, whom he had met in England, and who followed his efforts to convert the Negroes with interest.[1] The Wesleys sent Davies a collection of books to distribute among the Negroes and poor whites, and in thanking them for their generosity, Davies wrote, "Though you and I may differ in some little things, I have long loved you and your brother, and wished and prayed for your success, as zealous revivers of experimental Christianity."[2]

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[1] Davies to J.F., 1 April 1755; 2 March 1756, ibid., pp. 6, 17.

[2] An Account of the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge Among the Poor: Began Anno 1750 (London: John Johnson, 1771), passim. Presbyterian Historical Society Collections, Philadelphia.

[3] Davies to J.F., 1 April 1755; Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies . . . , pp. 8-13.

John Wesley was enthusiastic about this educational and evangelical work among the slaves that Davies was doing in the 1750's, but two decades later after visiting America and seeing slavery in practice, Wesley began to condemn the institution, and in 1774 published his anti-slavery treatise Thoughts Upon Slavery.[3] Samuel Davies, however, was a slaveholder himself and had even purchased one of his slaves from Governor Gooch through arrangements made by his brother-in-law John Holt.[4] We have no evidence that he ever experienced this horror at the system which struck Wesley, although Pilcher believes "he revealed whatever doubts he had about the institution simply by refraining from praising it."[1] Anti-slavery sentiment was certainly not strong in the colonies in the mid-eighteenth century, and that which existed was largely the work of Quaker publicists such as John Woolman. It was not until the 1760's and 1770's that this line of Quaker thinking which stemmed from the Golden Rule and the belief in a divine spark in all men converged with natural rights philosophy to form the basis of anti-slavery feeling at the time of the Revolution.[2]

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[1] Dissenter correspondents of John Wesley sent him copies of letters they had received from Davies describing his work among the Negroes in Virginia. Wesley copied two of these (which were later printed in Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies . . .) into his journal under the dates of 27 June 1755 and 22 February 1756. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley A.M. in Four Volumes, ed. by Ernest Phys (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1907), II, 303, 320.

[2] Davies to John Wesley, 28 January 1757, ibid., II, 359.

[3] Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, p. 12n.

[4] Davies to Holt, 10 February 1748/9, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, Vol. XXIV.

Davies, who was a conscientious master and was genuinely concerned about the abuses in slavery,[3] died before the development of this line of thought. His attitude seems to have been well within the Calvinist framework of a hierarchical society which adopted a humanitarian but not equalitarian attitude towards slavery. This involved a system of mutual obligations by which the church stressed the Christian duty of a master to care for the soul as well as the body of his slave and for the slave to take advantage of the opportunity for salvation while performing his proper obligations to his master.[1]

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[1] Pilcher, "Samuel Davies and the Instruction of Negroes," p. 296.

[2] Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, pp. 10-11.

[3] In a sermon passage addressed to slaves, Davies once said, "You know I have shown a tender concern for your welfare, ever since I have been in the colony; and you may ask my own Negroes whether I treat them kindly or not." "On the Defeat of General Braddock," Barnes (ed.), Sermons on Important Subjects, III, 228.

Davies sent a copy of a sermon he preached on the instruction of slaves to the Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge to be printed in London so that Davies could distribute it free of charge in Virginia, for he felt sure Virginians would never pay for such a thing.[2] He dealt with this obligation of masters in another sermon on family religion in which he said

> If then he that does not provide for his domestics a competancy of the necessities of life has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, what shall we say of him that neglects their souls, and takes no pain to form them for a happy mortality? . . . Therefore, if you love your children; if you would make some amends to your servants for all the service they do to you . . . begin and continue the worship of God in your families from this day to the close of your lives.[3]

Although some prominent Virginians objected to Davies' efforts to educate the Negroes for Christianity,[4] most planters in his area, even "such Masters, as have no Religion at all, or are Bigots to the established church,"[1] permitted their Negroes to attend his services and instruction, and he held out the high hope that the members of his own congregation, who owned four or five hundred Negroes, would teach their slaves to read.[2] Virginia planters and churchmen had little reason to complain of Davies' activities among the slaves, for they followed the approach approved and urged by the hierarchy of the Church of England and seemed to have differed little, if any, from a series of sermons preached by the Anglican minister at St. Peter's Parish in Maryland and printed in London in 1750.[3] The basis for the instruction of slaves had been established the preceding century by the Puritan theologian Richard Baxter in his Christian Directory (1673) which was widely circulated among slaveowners, and with which Davies, who was an admirer of Baxter's work, was probably quite familiar.[4]

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[1] For a discussion on the development of this attitude see Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, pp. 4-7, 13.

[2] Davies to the Rev. Mr. F--, 7 February 1757, Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies . . ., p. 29.

[3] "The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion," Barnes, Sermons on Important Subjects, II, pp. 44, 51-52.

[4] Col. Edwin Conway of Lancaster County who had read the sermon Davies distributed, claimed to the Commissary that Davies had told the Negroes they were stronger than the whites. Conway to Thomas Dawson, 3 March 1758, quoted in Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 96.

A final point which Davies did not hesitate to press in gaining favor for his work with the Negroes was the utilitarian political aspect of his program. Virginians feared that their enemies the French might encourage the slaves into rebellion with promises of liberty during the French and Indian Wars. Davies took advantage of this fear by emphasizing that the favorable impression created among the Negroes by the distribution of the books from England and the instruction in reading would help convince the slaves of the benevolent concern of their English masters.[1] In one of his several widely-circulated patriotic sermons Davies addressed the Negroes in the congregation saying, "Let not any of you think that it is all one whether the French take the country or not, for you will, at worst, be slaves still." Then, to strike patriotic fear into the hearts of the blacks he continued,

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[1] Davies to J.F., 2 March 1756, Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies . . . , pp. 20-21.

[2] Davies to Mr. C., 7 February 1757, ibid., p. 25.

[3] Rev. Thomas Bacon, Four Sermons upon the Great Indispensable Duty of all Christian Masters and Mistresses to Bring up Their Negro Slaves in the Knowledge and Fear of God (London, 1750), mentioned in Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, pp. 14-15; "Samuel Davies & Instruction of Negroes," p. 297.

[4] Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, p. 13.

> They are a cruel, barbarious people; and if you should disobey them, they would torment you, or put you to death in the most shocking manner. It will have weight with such of you as have any concern about religion, to be told, that if you should fall into the hands of the French, you must either give up your religion, or be tied to a stake, and burnt to ashes for it. . . . It becomes you, therefore, to do all you can to keep yourselves and our country out of the hands of these fierce and cruel creatures.[2]

Another project in which Davies played an instrumental role was the formation of the Presbytery of Hanover in 1755, the first presbytery in the South. Davies' efforts from 1749 to 1752 to get more Presbyterian ministers to settle in Virginia were finally well rewarded. Although Commissary Dawson wrote the Bishop of London that "the New Lights seemed to be in a declining condition during the absence of Mr. Davies,"[1] the dissenting congregations were actually well supplied with visiting ministers from the Synod during this period. In addition, and more important, several new ministers settled in Virginia. Robert Henry, who visited Virginia in 1752 at the request of Davies and the Synod, settled in Lunenburg County to minister to the Presbyterians there.[2] John Wright, whom Davies had influenced into the ministry, supplied Davies' pulpit during his absence, then settled in Cumberland County among the growing group of Presbyterians there.[3] The Scotch-Irish who were pouring into the Shenandoah Valley at this time tended to adhere to the Old Side in the Presbyterian split, but two New Light ministers affiliated with Newcastle Presbytery, settled in the valley, John Brown and Alexander Craighead.[4]

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[1] Davies to J.F., 2 March 1756, Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies . . . , pp. 13-15.

[2] "On the Defeat of General Braddock, Going to Fort-Du-Quesne," Barnes, Sermons on Important Subjects, III, 228-229.

These six men, isolated as they were from the colony of Delaware, found it very difficult to attend meetings of Newcastle Presbytery. Their absorption with the rigors of frontier living and the problems peculiar to their situation as dissenters in Virginia gave them much in common. It was therefore not surprising that

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[1] William Dawson to the Bishop of London, 13 August 1755. Dawson Papers, Library of Congress. Minutes of the Synod of New York, 3 October 1753; 26 September 1754, and 1 October 1755. Records of the Presbyterian Church, pp. 254-255; 259-260, 262.

[2] Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 650-652.

[3] Ibid., pp. 624-628.

[4] Ibid., pp. 434-437, 656-657.

> A petition was brought into the Synod setting forth the necessity of erecting a new Presbytery in Virginia, the Synod therefore appoint the Rev. Samuel Davies, John Todd, Alexander Craighead, Robert Henry, John Wright, and John Brown, to be a Presbytery, under the name of the Presbytery of Hanover, and that their first meeting shall be in Hanover, on the first Wednesday of December next, and that Mr. Davies open said meeting by a sermon, and that any of their members settling to the southward and westward of Mr. Hogge's congregation, shall have liberty to join said Presbytery of Hanover.[1]

The new presbytery met as appointed and accorded Davies the well-deserved honor of being the first moderator. The first public act of the presbytery was to proclaim a day of fasting on New Year's Day for the serious condition of the colonies in the threat of war.[2]

The organization of the presbytery gave increased strength to Presbyterianism in Virginia by providing a geographic organization to the dissenters who had heretofore operated only as scattered congregations, and by giving Presbyterian groups moving into the colony from Pennsylvania a body to which they could apply for preaching supplies with much greater hope of receiving them than from presbyteries to the north. News of the presbytery quickly spread to Presbyterian societies all over the colony, for by the second meeting in March 1756 petitions were received and supplies appointed to Chesterfield, Lunenburg, Albemarle, Prince Edward, Augusta, and Halifax Counties.[1] In addition, the presbytery could supervise the preparation of young candidates for the ministry, a job which Davies had undertaken alone. Although the formation of Hanover Presbytery did not detract from the importance of the synod, it did give the church a more solid foundation for work in the south, and made Presbyterianism a Virginia institution, not merely an outpost of a northern church.

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[1] Minutes of the Synod of New York, 1 October 1755. Records of the Presbyterian Church, p. 263.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 3 December 1755.

In addition to his interest in teaching and evangelizing Negro slaves, Davies also developed a strong interest in missionary work among Indians. It seems likely that this was first stimulated by an appeal he heard at the synod meeting in 1751, after which the synod urged all members to make a yearly collection for Indian missions.[2] The various collections were presented the following year and "paid into the hands of Mr. Brainerd, to be disposed of by the correspondents for the Indian affairs."[3] Another synod member who worked among the

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 18 March 1756.

[2] Minutes of the Synod of New York, 27 September 1751. Records of the Presbyterian Church, p. 244.

[3] Minutes of the Synod of New York, 29 September 1752, ibid., 247. The recipient of the fund, John Brainerd, of New York Presbytery, had been a missionary to Delaware Indians in Pennsylvania and New Jersey since 1747 when he succeeded to his deceased brother, David Brainerd, in the post.

Indians was Azariah Horton of Suffolk Presbytery on Long Island. These men were supported chiefly by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, an organization founded in 1709 to maintain schools among impoverished Scots, and which in 1730 began sending missionaries to American Indians. In America the Society operated through groups of commissioners, or correspondents, one established in Boston in 1730, and another in 1741 in New York.[1]

Davies must have been instructed by these commissioners or their representatives at the 1753 Synod to seek further assistance in Britain for the missionary endeavors, for he noted in the beginning of his journal, "the commissioners for Indian affairs, will be glad of this opportunity for the propagation of the religion of Jesus among the poor savages; and it is likely we shall succeed in raising contributions for that end."[2]

Although we do not know what particular project Davies hoped to solicit funds for, it may have been the mission the Boston Commissioners, early in 1753, decided to establish under Gideon Hawley among the Six Nations in the upper Susquehanna in New York.[3] Through no great coincidence, the recently formed

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[1] An Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (n.p. 1774), pp. 5-14. Presbyterian Historical Society Collections.

[2] Journal of Samuel Davies, 2 July 1753. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 230.

[3] Hawley (1727-1807) graduated from Yale in 1749 and in 1750 was licensed to preach by the Fairfield East Association. In

Susquehannah Company, whose members included prominent Presbyterian laymen, was interested in getting title to this land for speculation, and Hawley worked with them towards that end.[1] But we do not know if Davies was cognizant of any of this yet.

In London, Jasper Maudit, one of the leading British dissenters, informed Davies that the Society in London for Propagating Christian Knowledge might be willing to contribute to the College of New Jersey fund if provision were made for the education of Indian youths at the school.[2] The following month Davies dined with a Mr. Anderson, secretary to the London correspondents for the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, but he does not divulge the outcome of this meeting.[3] In May while in Edinburgh for the meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Davies visited the SPCK, and "at their request, gave them our best advice about the best method of conducting the mission among the Indians."[4] In Glasgow the following week Davies spent some time with a Mr.

1752 he went to Stockbridge, Mass., on pay of the SPCK and under direction of Jonathan Edwards. A power struggle within the Society caused him to leave in 1754 to establish a mission in New York. "Gideon Hawley," DAB, IV, 418.

[1] Julian P. Boyd (ed.), The Susquehannah Company Papers, Volume I: 1750-1755 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1962), pp. lxxi-lxxii.

[2] Davies' Journal, 5 January 1754, Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 245.

[3] Ibid., 14 February 1754, p. 253.

[4] Ibid., 30 May 1754, p. 261.

McCullogh, brother-in-law to Governor Dinwiddie, and this staunch Presbyterian spoke to Davies about a donation of £200 for mission work among the Indians.[1]

All of these negotiations appear quite vague, and we cannot know whether Davies was simply acting as agent for the SPCK correspondents, or he already had plans in mind for the participation of Virginia Presbyterians in the Indian mission effort. Sometime in 1756 however, Davies formulated very definite plans to start a mission.

He had heard that the Catawba Indians who lived in the North Carolina piedmont and were very friendly to the English,[2] were willing to have a missionary and schoolteacher, so he wrote his old friend Jasper Maudit, treasurer of the London SPCK inquiring if they would be willing to support the effort. Maudit sent a favorable reply and requested further information. Meanwhile Davies learned that the Cherokees were a more important nation and that their friendship had considerable political value to the British in their struggle against the French.[3] He informed the SPCK of this and suggested that if they could only support mission work to one nation, the selection should be the Cherokee.

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[1] _Ibid_., 5 July 1754, pp. 263-264.

[2] Douglas Le Tell Rights, _The American Indian in North Carolina_ (Durham: Duke University Press, 1947), pp. 125-126.

[3] Since 1730 the Cherokees, the largest tribe in the Carolinas, had been pledged to mutual friendship with England. Between 1753 and 1755 as war with the French threatened, the English built three forts for the Cherokees in North and South Carolina, and were desirous of maintaining their friendship. Henry Thompson Malone, _Cherokees of the Old South: A People in Transition_ (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1956), pp. 7-8.

In February 1757 the Society in London replied that they would gladly support a missionary and teacher if the Society in Scotland would agree to do the same, although the latter had not yet concurred. Davies felt highly encouraged by this, especially because "Virginia, in some little Time, will furnish us with one Missionary & Schoolmaster."[1] The candidate for this post was Davies' own student, John Martin, who had been taken on trials by the new Hanover Presbytery. In August 1756 Martin was licensed, and served as a supply in Virginia until plans for the Indian mission could be arranged.[2] Davies wrote his faithful correspondent, Bellamy, that he did not have another man to spare, and hoped Bellamy would help him. Davies said he had heard that Gideon Hawley was a good man, and that he had resigned his mission post in New York. Davies enclosed a letter to Hawley and hoped Bellamy would deliver it personally and try to encourage Hawley to join the southern mission.[3]

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[1] Davies to Joseph Bellamy, 23 February 1757. Gratz Collection, College Presidents, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[2] Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 18 March 1756; 25 August 1756; 8 June 1757.

[3] Davies to Bellamy, 23 February 1757. Warfare in the Oghwaga Area caused Hawley to leave the mission in 1756, and it was at this point that Davies hoped to obtain his services in Carolina. "Gideon Hawley," DAB, IV, 418.

Hawley, however, wanted to be chaplain for a regiment at Crown Point, and when illness prevented that, he attempted to resume his work at Oghwaga.[1] Davies probably learned of this in the summer. He did not lose hope of obtaining another man, and carefully followed all developments in relation to frontier Indians that might affect the opening of the mission.[2] In November he turned to another source for help. He wrote his friend Samuel Hazard, Philadelphia merchant, land speculator, and prominent Presbyterian layman, "Mr. Atkin,[3] Superintendent of Indian Affairs, has been lately in W^{ms}burg, & reports, that the Chirokees are now unanimous in their Attachm^{t} to the British Interest. May our good Managem^{t} long keep them so."[4] He informed Hazard that they had formed a Society for the Management of Indian Missions and Schools and needed personnel. They could offer a missionary £70 or 80 a year and a schoolmaster £25 or 30, and hoped that Hazard might have a suggestion for a candidate.[5]

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[1] _Ibid_.

[2] Davies to Samuel Hazard, 18 May 1757, Hazard Family Papers, Miscellaneous MSS Box, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[3] Edmund Atkin served as His Majesty's Indian Agent for the Southern District in control of the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Choctaws, from 1756 until his death, at which time he was replaced by John Stuart. Malone, _Cherokees of the Old South_, p. 8.

[4] Davies to Samuel Hazard, 3 November 1757, Hazard Family Papers, Miscellaneous MSS Box.

[5] _Ibid_.

Meanwhile the new Society petitioned Governor Dinwiddie, informing him that they were impowered by the Societies in London and Edinburgh to support two missionaries and two teachers, and sought his recommendation of John Martin, who had been ordained by the presbytery and licensed by the General Court. Dinwiddie wrote to William Henry Lyttleton, Governor of South Carolina

> As I am sensible a Work of this kind, if duly managed and conducted, will be productive of great good to His Majesty's Service, and singular Advantages to his American Dominions, I beg leave to introduce the said Mr. Martin to your Excellency, and doubt not but you'll countenance and support him, that he may be enabled to discharge his Duty in so momentous an Affair.[1]

Davies, as Secretary of the Society, also wrote Governor Lyttleton, reminding him of the religious and political significance of the venture, and requesting such recommendations to the Cherokees as would "introduce & ingratiate" Martin among them.[2]

Martin probably embarked on his mission early in 1758, for the Society applied to the presbytery that he be excused from appointments at the January meeting.[3] His initial reports to the Society were encouraging for he indicated that the Cherokees would like another missionary.[4] Accordingly, on 13 September

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[1] Dinwiddie to William Henry Lyttleton, 14 December 1757. Lyttleton Papers, Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., microfilm.

[2] Davies to Governor Lyttleton, 16 December 1757. Lyttleton Papers.

[3] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 25 January 1758.

[4] Davies to Governor Lyttleton, 2 October 1758. Lyttleton Papers.

1758 Davies petitioned the presbytery to permit William Richardson to go to the Indians.[1] Richardson departed soon. Davies wrote Governor Lyttleton informing him that Richardson was en route to the upper towns of the Cherokees, but that the distance from Charleston and the time involved would prevent him from waiting personally on the governor as Martin had. Nonetheless, Davies hoped Lyttleton would recommend Richardson to the commanders of the forts.[2] Francis Fauquier, the new Lieutenant Governor of Virginia wrote a similar letter to Lyttleton informing him that Richardson had been given a set of instructions on his conduct, approved by the governor in council.[3]

Unfortunately, the Cherokees were not as firmly attached to the British cause as Superintendent Atkin had indicated, and relations with them rapidly deteriorated at the end of the decade, partly as a result of mismanagement on the part of Governor Lyttleton who ordered a punitive expedition against the Cherokees for some raids on frontier settlements, and partly from French intrigue among the Indians.[4] The Cherokees eventually sided with the French, and war broke out between these Indians and the British. At this point it was necessary for Martin and Richardson to abandon their mission.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 13 September 1758; 25 September 1758.

[2] Davies to Lyttleton, 2 October 1758.

[3] Francis Fauquier to Governor Lyttleton, 5 October 1758, Lyttleton Papers.

[4] Malone, Cherokees of the Old South, p. 8; "William Henry Lyttleton," DAB, VI, 538-539. For a discussion of powers in the direction of Indian affairs which Lyttleton wrested from the South Carolina House of Commons, see Jack P. Greene, The Quest for Power, pp. 321-323.

By this time also, Davies, who had been the guiding hand in the project, was leaving Virginia to assume the presidency of the College of New Jersey, and could devote no more time to transferring these missionaries to friendlier Indian tribes. This venture, while short-lived, was still important, because it was one of the only efforts at mission work among the Indians in any of the southern colonies since the seventeenth century.

When Davies returned to Virginia in 1755 from his trip to England, the British were on the verge of war with France, and Virginia had been selected as the battleground. In his absence the colony had been fighting the French and Indians encroaching on frontier territory claimed by Virginia. The French had taken the Ohio Company fort, which they renamed Fort DuQuesne, and Virginia troops under Washington had been defeated at Fort Necessity in 1754 before the reluctant Burgesses voted funds for defense.[1] The British government was preparing to prosecute the war under the direction of Major General Edward Braddock, and Davies returned to Virginia on 13 April 1755, just six days before Braddock arrived.[2]

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[1] Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 635-663.

[2] Davies' Journal in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 281.

On 9 July 1756 Braddock's army was ignominiously defeated by the French and Indians near Fort DuQuesne. Virginians were shocked by this unexpected turn of events and suddenly responded to Dinwiddie's defense efforts with greater enthusiasm. Davies was one of those deeply disturbed by the defeat, and he immediately contributed his two most powerful weapons to the cause--his voice and his pen. He was away from Hanover when he received the news of Braddock, but he hurried home and prepared two sermons about the defeat which he then had printed. He vividly pictured the drought conditions in Virginia, the horrors of Indian attacks on the frontier families, and the bloddy battle scene when the British forces met defeat.[1] Davies expressed the belief that these calamities were God's punishment on Virginians for their sins. The real enemies were the lukewarm, impenitent hearts that were attached to so many vices; it was these sins that killed Braddock and the brave Virginia soldiers, and the cure for the situation was repentance.[2]

In addition to this spiritual cure, Davies offered the Virginians valuable practical advice. He urged them to adopt a solid defensive position for the entire colony rather than leaving the burden on the western settlers. He reminded them that "Your Liberty, your Property, your Religion, your Lives, your All are at Stake," for French Catholic government over British Protestants would be nothing short of tyranny.[1] In these patriotic sermons we see a new attitude taken by Davies toward the Virginians, and it seems reasonable to conclude that this strong defense of the empire and the appeal to unity on the part of all British Protestants was the result of the broadening experience of his recent trip to Great Britain. There he had been warmly received in important circles and even preached before the king, treatment which contrasted with the difficulties he had encountered with the Virginia government officials. By taking such a strong patriotic stand Davies placed himself and his church in a position where they could gain much favor from the government which had previously been denied them.

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[1] Davies, Virginia's Danger and Remedy, pp. 6-11. Although the sermons were dated August 4, 1755, Hunter was too busy to print them until the following February.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-29.

Less than two weeks after Davies preached these sermons, citizens of Hanover, Amelia, and Lunenburg Counties volunteered to raise companies of troops and furnish their support for six months, completely independent of and preceding action by the Assembly.[2] It is not coincidental that these were the three counties east of the mountains with the heaviest concentrations of Presbyterians, nor was it mere chance that the first company organized was that from Hanover County under the command of Captain Samuel Overton. Davies worked actively to recruit men for this company, and it was to them that he preached his famous sermon "Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier"[1] in which he prophetically announced, "I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Col. Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, for some important service." Davies preached several other patriotic sermons in behalf of the war effort. The most famous of them was "The Curse of Cowardice," preached in 1758 to raise a company for Captain Samuel Meredith, and printed in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Woodbridge, New Jersey.[2] Davies urged that his listeners form the company that very day, saying

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[1] Ibid., pp. 44-49.

[2] Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 677.

> Oh! for the influence of the Lord of armies, the God of battles, the Author of true courage, and every heroic virtue, to fire you into patriots and true soldiers this moment! ye young and hardy men, whose very faces seem to speak that God and nature formed you for soldiers . . . ye that love your country enlist; for honour will follow you in life or death in such a cause. You that love your religion, enlist; for your religion is in danger. . . . Ye that love your friends and relations enlist; lest ye see them enslaved and butchered before your eyes.[3]

Davies did not question the justification or the cause of this war. To him it was quite clear: for nearly ten years he had preached that the entire complex of Virginia society was being eroded from within by the sin of her people. Once the people recognized this and acknowledged the sovereignty of God, they must rise to the present crisis in two ways, first by repentance before God, then by resisting the physical enemy with military force.[1] So firm indeed was his conviction of the justness of the Virginia Protestants' cause as opposed to the evil of French Catholicism that Davies indicated that the God who had saved England from the Spanish invasion, the Gunpowder plot, and who guided the Glorious Revolution would once again be on the side of British Protestantism.[2]

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[1] Samuel Davies, Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a Good Soldier. A Sermon preached to Captain Overton's Independent Company of Volunteers, Raised in Hanover County, Virginia, August 17, 1755. . . . (Philadelphia: James Chattin, 1755).

[2] Samuel Davies, The Curse of Cowardice. A Sermon Preached to the Militia of Hanover County in Virginia, at a General Muster May 8, 1758, with a view to raise a Company for Captain Samuel Meredith (Woodbridge, N.J.: James Parker, 1759).

[3] Quoted in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 295-296.

These patriotic sermons were instrumental in infusing an enthusiasm for war among Virginians. The response to them and to the entire war effort evinced by the Presbyterians in Virginia did much to relieve tensions between the government and the established church on one hand and the dissenters on the other.

Davies, like so many of his contemporaries who received a classical education, acquired a love for literature and a taste for occasional writing that remained with him throughout his life. In the midst of his normal pastoral duties and his additional activities in behalf of toleration, the Negroes, the Indians, the College of New Jersey, and the war effort, he always found time to compose a poem, a hymn, or a timely essay, and he worked constantly to build up his library which included a fine collection of both classical and contemporary works.

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[1] Leonard J. Kramer, "The Political Ethics of the American Presbyterian Clergy in the Eighteenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1942), p. 97.

[2] Samuel Davies, "God the sovereign of all Kingdoms," quoted in Kramer, "Political Ethics of Presbyterian Clergy," p. 95.

In his twelve years in the colony there were few, if indeed any, other Virginians who appeared so frequently in print. His first publication in the colony was prompted by the Reverend Patrick Henry's publication in 1746 of An Impartial Trial of the Spirit.[1] This was a sermon preached in 1741 at New Londonderry, New Hampshire, by one John Caldwell who was highly critical of the religious revival. Henry had added a preface denouncing the New Lights and obviously hoped to counteract their influence in Virginia. Davies felt it was necessary to defend the position of the New Light Presbyterians. In his reply, The Impartial Trial, impartially Tried, and convicted of Partiality, Davies exposed Caldwell as an imposter whose name was Thornton,[2] then proceeded to defend the evangelical revival on scriptural and rational grounds, and denied Henry's charge through the Caldwell sermon that the New Lights were not true Presbyterians.[1]

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[1] John Caldwell, An Impartial Trial of the Spirit Operating in this Part of the World; By Comparing the Nature, Effects and Evidences, of the Present Supposed Conversion with the Word of God. A Sermon Preached at New Londonderry, October 14, 1741 (Williamsburg: William Parks, 1746). This sermon was originally published in Boston by T. Fleet, 1742.

[2] Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, pp. 81-84. Recent scholarship indicates that Davies was misinformed in calling Caldwell an imposter. See Barney L. Jones, "John Caldwell, Critic of the Great Awakening in New England" in Stuart C. Henry (ed.), A Miscellany of American Christianity: Essays in Honor of H. Shelton Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 1963), pp. 177-182.

The following year Davies saw two of his essays published in the Virginia Gazette, the first, an Essay on Swearing was printed by early February,[2] and the other was sent to the editor in July. Davies sent the latter to his brother-in-law John Holt to give to William Parks, printer of the Gazette with the advice, "If you judge the annexing of my name will any way obstruct the Usefulness of it, you may conceal it & perhaps there are some that wou'd rather not receive advantage than receive it from me."[3] An anonymous opponent of the revival signed "Artemas" once wrote a satirical article or pamphlet lampooning Davies for the tears and fainting his sermons produced. Davies replied with a pamphlet called A Pill for Artemas, but no copy of this is extant.[4] On another occasion Davies wrote an essay on three volumes of Bolingbroke which he had just read, and sent the manuscript to a Scottish merchant in the Petersburg area to circulate among his friends, but Davies apparently never intended this for publication.[1]

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[1] This reply to Henry's aspersions on the New Lights was contained in an Appendix Proving the Right of the Synod of New York to the Religious Liberties and Immunities allowed to the Protestant Dissenters. For a discussion of this see Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, pp. 75-76, 84.

[2] Davies to John Holt, 10 February 1748/9. Benjamin Rush Correspondence, XXIV. Texts of these essays are not available as there are no extant copies of the Virginia Gazette from 1747-1750.

[3] Davies to John Holt, 4 July 1749. Ibid.

[4] Bost, "Samuel Davies . . . ," pp. 52-53n.

Davies' marriage to Jane Holt proved advantageous to his literary career, for his newly-acquired brother-in-law John Holt married Elizabeth Hunter, sister of William Hunter who in 1750 became the printer of the Virginia Gazette.[2] Hunter probably taught Holt the printing trade, and from 1750-1754 Holt worked with him on the Gazette.[3] In this period Davies submitted numerous articles and poems to his brother-in-law, who gave them to Hunter to print. Without this friendly connection, it is quite possible that Davies' writing would not have reached a wide Virginia audience, for after Holt left the colony Davies appeared less frequently in the Gazette, and seems to have turned to the American Magazine in Philadelphia as an outlet for his creative streak.[4] Davies' relationship with Holt was a pleasant and mutually beneficial one. The two exchanged books and discussed them in their letters, and Holt, who remained a staunch Anglican, provided Davies with a good testing ground for the expression of his religious sentiments.

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[1] Samuel Davies, "Remarks on the Philosophical Works of Lord Bolingbroke" (1757) in "A Recovered Tract of President Davies: now first published," Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, IX (July 1837), 349-359.

[2] "Old Virginia Editors," William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, series 1, VII (July 1898), 11-17.

[3] "John Holt," DAB, V, 180-181; R. W. G. Vail, "A Patriotic Pair of Peripatetic Printers: The Upstate Imprints of John Holt and Samuel Loudon, 1776-1783," Essays Honoring Lawrence C. Wroth (Portland, Me.: Anthoensen Press, 1951), pp. 391-393.

[4] See "Political Essays," American Magazine, I (July 1758), 499-505, containing eight poems by Davies, including "A Father's Reflection on the Birth of a Son," and "A Hymn Adapted to the Present State of Public Affairs."

Virginia readers first encountered Davies' poetry in the _Virginia Gazette_ of 7 February 1750/51 in a five-stanza poem for which Holt wrote an introduction.[1] When Davies thanked his brother-in-law for the introductory remarks, he modestly mentioned his small collection of poems which friends had urged him to have printed at their expense.[2] These poems were published early in 1752 as _Miscellaneous Poems, chiefly on Divine Subjects_.[3] The volume contained forty-nine poems expressing a pietistic viewpoint on a variety of subjects and occasions such as "Solomon," "The Messiah's Kingdom," "Elegiac Verse on the lamented Death of the Rev. Mr. Samuel Blair," and "Conjugal Love and Happiness." There is little originality in the poetry, and Davies himself freely admitted that he was strongly influenced by Pope, Watts, Elizabeth Rowe, Matthew Prior, and especially Edward Young.[4]

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[1] "To the Printer of the _Virginia Gazette_," (Hunter) _Virginia Gazette_, 7 February 1750/51.

[2] Davies to John Holt, 2 March 1750/51, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, XXIV.

[3] Samuel Davies, _Miscellaneous Poems, Chiefly on Divine Subjects, in two books, published for the Religious Entertainment of Christians in General_ (Williamsburg, Va.: William Hunter, 1752).

[4] Craig Gilborn, "Samuel Davies' Sacred Muse," _Journal of Presbyterian History_, XLI (June 1963), pp. 65, 68-69, 75. Davies

Davies' small volume of poetry became the cause of a protracted literary feud on the pages of the Virginia Gazette. The first blow was struck in the issue of 20 March 1752 in an article called "Remarks on the Virginia Pindar" by one Walter Dymocke. Criticisms by Dymocke and his "second" and defenses by Davies and his supporters appeared in nearly every issue of the Gazette from April through July 1752.[1] The mysterious Walter Dymocke was in reality the Reverend John Robertson, minister of Southam Parish until 1751, and one of the four clergymen who had petitioned the General Assembly against the dissenter ministers in 1748.[2] His objection to Davies was not based solely on his poetry; it would seem that Robertson grasped at this literary feud as a means of discrediting Davies. Nor would he drop the subject after a mock elegy on the death of Dymocke in the Gazette.[3] In the winter of 1753 he renewed the dispute under his real name over a minor theological point in one of the poems, and the argument continued until Davies wrote

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greatly admired Young's Night Thoughts which he had asked Holt to bring him from England. Davies to Holt, 12 September 1751, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, XXIV.

[1] Robert M. Myers, "The Old Dominion Looks at London: A Study of English Literary Influences upon the Virginia Gazette (1736-1766)," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LIV (July 1946), pp. 198-200.

[2] Gilborn, "Samuel Davies' Sacred Muse," p. 75.

[3] Immediately after the appearance of this elegy in the Gazette, Davies wrote Holt, "I am well pleased wth Mr. Hunter's conduct in suppressing ye Papers on both sides in our critical Controversy. . . ." Davies to Holt, 7 August 1752, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, XXIV.

Holt in May, "I am heartily sick of so insipid a Controversy, & engage in it with the utmost Reluctance."[1]

As with his highly derivative poetry, Davies made a small contribution to colonial letters as the first American hymn writer. At the time of Davies' ministry most Congregationalist, Baptist, and Presbyterian groups which used hymns considered Isaac Watts' collection so satisfactory that their ministers did not attempt to write hymns. Davies' hymns were composed primarily to illustrate the theme of his sermon and he probably read them at the end of the sermon rather than having the congregation sing them.[2] Little can be said for their originality, for Davies imitated the popular and successful style developed by Watts a few years earlier. Although some of Davies' hymns appeared in print in his lifetime with individual sermons he had printed, most did not appear until after his death when Thomas Gibbons, his friend and editor of his sermons, reprinted sixteen of them in a hymnbook he published in London in 1769. Gibbons' book became a source book for many compilers, and several of Davies' hymns were used repeatedly in Presbyterian and Baptist hymnals in Britain and America throughout the late eighteenth and all of the nineteenth centuries.[3]

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[1] Gilborn, "Samuel Davies' Sacred Muse," pp. 75, 78.

[2] Edward S. Ninde, The Story of the American Hymn (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1921), pp. 41, 43.

[3] Louis F. Benson, "President Davies as a Hymn Writer," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, II (September

In 1759, with considerable reluctance, Davies left Virginia to succeed Jonathan Edwards as the fourth president of the young College of New Jersey. Davies had refused the job when it was first offered in 1758, and his congregation petitioned the Synod of New York and Philadelphia

> In short, there is no great and good work to be conducted in our country in general, and among us in particular, but our pastor is engaged, some way or other in it; and the eyes of almost all are directed to him as a leader. . . . Then the crumbling materials which compose this congregation will fall to ruins, when the band that now holds it is broken; . . . Our enemies will rush upon us like hungry lions to devour, and enjoy a malignant triumph over us in our loss.[1]

In his farewell sermon in Hanover County on 1 July 1759, Davies reminisced with these people he had grown to love about his fears and discouragements in the early years in Virginia, but the successes he had achieved by the time of his departure must also have given him reason for pride. It had been largely through his efforts and popularity that Presbyterianism was placed on a firm footing in Virginia, and this he surely knew. By the time of the Revolution, Presbyterianism was an important denomination whose adherents were making significant contributions to Virginia life, but Davies did not live to participate in that success for which he was in a large sense responsible.

1904), pp. 285-286. The Gibbons book was Hymns adapted to Divine Worship: in two books . . . Partly collected from Various Authors, but principally composed by Thomas Gibbons, D.D. (London: Printed for J. Buckland, etc., 1769).

[1] "Catalogus Collegii Neo-Caesariensis. Princetoniae. Typis Roberti E. Hornor. 1839," Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review, XII (July 1840), p. 382.

V. THE PROLIFERATION OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN VIRGINIA

Although Presbyterianism underwent a period of extensive growth in Virginia after 1750, especially in the Southside and Shenandoah Valley, until 1760 the focal point and most important center of the denomination was in Hanover County. This was in part because the dissenter revival had begun there, and the area contained the oldest congregations in the colony, whose members had endured the years of harassment from the government and the established church over the toleration issue. But even more than this, Hanover seems to have been the Presbyterian center of Virginia because of the unique leadership exercised by Samuel Davies, for after his departure from the colony in 1759, this area rapidly declined as the strongest center of the denomination.

There are indications that in the last years of his Virginia ministry Davies experienced some difficulties with his congregations because they resented the time he spent travelling to preach to other groups. In April 1758 they asked the presbytery to exempt him from this chore unless a substitute were provided.[1] When Davies received the invitation to become president of the College of New Jersey, his congregation petitioned the presbytery against his removal, saying, "we shall never be gathered together, we fear, and united in another minister."[1] The presbytery agreed, saying they "can by no means agree to his Removal, as they forsee Consequences very dangerous to the important Interests of Religion among us; . . ."[2] The consequences in Virginia as a whole of Davies' removal were less grave than the presbytery imagined, for by 1759 the denomination was firmly established in several areas. However, the Hanover group was more accurate in their predictions, and even Davies himself must have seen that the congregation was splintering, for in his farewell sermon he urged them to try to live in peace with each other within the church.[3]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 26 April 1758.

For three years Davies' former congregations depended on occasional supplies from the presbytery and synod while they searched for a permanent minister.[4] One of their supplies in this period was David Rice, a local youth who had been converted under Davies' preaching, educated by John Todd, and then attended the College of New Jersey while Davies was president.[1] In April 1762 he offered himself to the Presbytery of Hanover as a candidate for the ministry, and in October 1763 he accepted a call to become pastor of Davies' congregation.[2] Rice brought his bride Mary Blair to Hanover. She was the daughter of Samuel Blair, and Rice had met her while visiting at Fagg's Manor with Davies.[3] Rice's ministry in Hanover was short, for he apparently experienced some difficulties with the congregation. The presbytery had suggested they try for three or four months to settle their differences, but by April 1766 they had not succeeded, and Rice received the dismission he requested from the presbytery.[4]

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[1] "Catalogus Collegii Neo-Caesariensis. Princetoniae. Typis Roberti E. Hornor. 1839," containing a petition from Davies' congregation to the Presbytery of Hanover, 13 September 1758.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 13 September 1758.

[3] Davies, "The Apostolic Valediction Considered and Applied," Barnes (ed.), Sermons on Important Subjects, III, 488.

[4] Petitions and appointments of supplies in Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 5 October 1759, April, September 1760, April, October 1761, April 1762.

Unfortunately, we have no accurate statistics regarding the size of Davies' and Rice's congregations at the peak of their strength. They were divided among half a dozen meeting houses in Hanover, Goochland, and Henrico Counties. The congregation in Louisa which John Todd took over in 1752 should also be included with Presbyterian statistics in the Hanover area. In 1751 Davies estimated that he had 300 communicants in his congregation, and it is unlikely that there were more than 500 when he left in 1759. At each meeting house there was a core of fifteen to twenty families who had actually affiliated with the Presbyterian church, but it was not unusual for several hundred people to attend each of the preaching services, and Davies had drawn crowds of a thousand occasionally.[1] Although Davies had prepared several young men for the ministry, he did not operate a school himself, but John Todd opened an academy at his congregation in Louisa County which made a significant contribution to education in that area. The Hanover area never regained its prominence as a Presbyterian center after Davies and Rice left, although Todd's congregation remained strong under his leadership for another quarter century. Lacking a strong minister to guide them, the congregations gradually weakened. Some of these Presbyterians probably returned to the Anglican church. Others joined the Baptists when their ministers came into the area by 1770. Their numbers were further diminished by the migration of many members to the new, fertile lands opening in the west.[2]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 78.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 7 April 1762, 6 October 1763.

[3] Vernon P. Martin, "'Father Rice': The Preacher Who Followed the Frontier."

[4] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 16 April 1766.

Before Presbyterianism in Hanover declined, other areas of Virginia experienced a significant growth of the denomination and were prepared to take over leadership of the church when the enthusiasm for it waned in its original Virginia home. Much of this growth was the result of the heavy migration of the Scots-Irish into the Shenandoah Valley, but there were also areas in which the Presbyterians made inroads into Anglican strongholds. One of these was in the Northern Neck, that portion of land lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, and encompassing the counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Richmond, King George, and Stafford in its eastern portion,[1] and the recently formed counties of Prince William, Fairfax, and Loudon in the west.

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[1] Davies, State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, pp. 22-24.

[2] Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 101.

The Northern Neck, an area of tobacco wealth and political power, had been well supplied with Anglican parishes for many years. There were at least eight parishes in the older counties in the eastern portion of the area,[2] yet in spite of the fact that these parishes were all supplied with ministers, Foote and others have claimed that the established church was in unusually poor condition in the area, suffering from an excess of vice on the part of the parishioners, and a lack of pious example from the clergy.[1]

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[1] These eastern counties had been settled early and were very much a part of Tidewater society. Their formation dates were: Northumberland 1648, Lancaster 1651, Westmoreland 1653, Richmond 1692, Stafford 1664, and King George 1721. Robinson, "Virginia Counties: Those Resulting from Virginia Legislation," p. 168.

[2] The parishes of the Northern Neck, listed by formation date and with the minister who served them c. 1750-1770 were: Cople Parish (Yecomico Church) 1664 in Westmoreland County under the Rev. Charles Rose 1738-1761; Christchurch Parish (Christchurch and St. Mary's Whitechapel Church) 1666 in Lancaster County under the Rev. David Currie from 1741-1791; North Farnham Parish (Farnham Church) in Richmond County under the Rev. William Makay from 1754-1774; Overwharton Parish (church burned 1751, new Aquia Church built 1757) in Stafford County under the Rev. John Moncure; Brunswick Parish in King George County under the Rev. Daniel MacDonald; Hanover Parish in King George County also, minister unknown; St. Stephen's Parish, Northumberland County; Lunenburg Parish in Richmond County under the Rev. Isaac Williams Giberne after 1758. George MacLaren Brydon, The Colonial Churches in Virginia (Richmond: Bliley Funeral Home and Virginia Chamber of Commerce, 1945), pp. 5-8, 12, 14-15; John Clement (compiler),

The Northern Neck had been singularly receptive to Calvinist influence long before Hanover Presbytery undertook work in the area in the mid-1750's. In the seventeenth century the Archbishop of Canterbury had the authority to license ministers of Genevan or Presbyterian ordination to relieve the shortage in the Anglican ministry. Several such men were sent to Virginia, and one of them, the Rev. Andrew Jackson, was the incumbent of Christchurch Parish, Lancaster County for twenty-four years until his death in 1710.[2] About that time a young Scottish schoolmaster, John Organ, gathered people in the Northern Neck for Presbyterian services, and the Synod of Philadelphia sent James Anderson to the area in 1709 at their

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"Anglican Clergymen Licensed to the American Colonies, 1710-1744, with Biographical Sketches," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, XVII (September 1948), pp. 225, 237, 243-244.

[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 354. Unfortunately Foote provides the reader with little actual evidence of the decadence of the church in the Northern Neck except for occasional rumors about the bad behavior of some of the clergy.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 28-29, and Appendix VIII, pp. 531-532.

request.[1] By 1720 we know that there were Presbyterian meetings in Westmoreland and King George Counties, and in 1723 a Northumberland County group petitioned the county court for permission to build a Presbyterian meeting house.[2] The Presbyterians seem to have terminated their activities in the Northern Neck after the Rev. Hugh Stevenson's hostile reception in 1733,[3] but it is entirely likely that some of these early dissenters and most certainly their children, were the nucleus of the new group of dissenters active from the mid-1750's.

The work of Hanover Presbytery in the Northern Neck began as another of Samuel Davies' many projects. At the April 1757 meeting of the presbytery, a group in Richmond County requested that Davies be sent to preach to them. He went there the last Sunday in June, and possibly as a result of this appearance, the presbytery received a request for supplies from Lancaster and Northumberland counties at their next meeting.[4] Davies was assigned three Sundays in the area and John Todd two. The following summer newly-licensed Henry Patillo served as supply to Lancaster, Westmoreland, Northumberland, and Richmond.

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[1] James Anderson to John Stirling, -- 1710, microfilm records of Lexington Presbytery, reel #103; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 355; supra, Chapter I.

[2] Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 19 and 22 September 1719, 20 September 1723; Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 56-57, 72-74.

[3] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, I, 258.

[4] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 27 April and 28 September 1757.

The area was joined by Essex County across the Rappahannock in requesting supplies in October. Davies was appointed to administer the first celebration of communion in the Northern Neck the last Sunday in March 1759, assisted by Todd.[1] A participant reported that there were forty-four communicants and eight or nine hundred in the congregation for this service held at the new meeting house which the Lancaster County Court had permitted.[2]

At this point, early in 1759, we are first able to catch an intimate glimpse of the development of Presbyterianism in the Northern Neck through the diary of Colonel James Gordon, one of the most prominent citizens of Lancaster County.[3] Gordon was born in Newry, County Down, Ireland, in 1714 of a family originally from Aberdeen. Little is known of his youth, although he may have matriculated at Glasgow University. About 1738 he and his brother John Gordon bade farewell to a brother and two sisters in Ireland and sailed for Virginia. John settled in Urbanna, Middlesex County, across the Rappahannock from Lancaster

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[1] Ibid., 26 April and 27 September 1758.

[2] David Currie and John Leland to Commissary Thomas Dawson, 12 April 1758. Quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 95; "Diary of James Gordon," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, Vol. X (July 1902), pp. 98-112, 23-26 March 1759.

[3] The paucity of correspondence or journals of Presbyterian leaders in colonial Virginia makes this daily record of an active Presbyterian layman and man of considerable education and wealth doubly important.

County where James established himself. Both became successful merchants and acquired considerable fortunes. James Gordon's business ventures included tobacco export, rum distilling, slave trading, and land investment. Both brothers married into well-established planter families, John to Lucy, daughter of Colonel Armistead Churchill and James in 1742 to Millicent, daughter of Colonel Edwin Conway, an eminent citizen of northern Virginia. She died in 1748, leaving one daughter, and later that year Gordon married Mary, daughter of Colonel Nathaniel Harrison of "Brandon" on the James in Charles City County.[1]

Unlike so many Scots who came to Virginia and conformed to the established church,[2] James Gordon, a deeply religious man conscious of his Calvinistic heritage as the great-grandson of a

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[1] Horace E. Hayden, Virginia Genealogies (reprinted. Washington, D.C.: The Rare Book Shop, 1931), pp. 248-252; Edward C. Earle, Jr. and Mildred Wooding, "Verville, Once Called Gordonsville," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine, VII (December 1957), pp. 597-600; Armistead C. Gordon, "Colonel James Gordon of Lancaster (1714-1768): Read at the presentation by his Descendants to the County of Lancaster, Virginia, of a Portrait of Col. James Gordon, July 2, 1915," MS at Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

[2] Samuel Davies had a low opinion of these Scots, and wrote of them: "There are and have been in this Colony a great Number of Scotch Merchants, who were educated Presbyterians; but (I speak but what their Conduct more loudly proclaims) they generally upon their Arrival here, prove Scandals to their Religion and Country by their loose Principles and immoral Practices, and either fall into an Indifferency about Religion in general, or affect to be polite by turning Deists, or fashionable by conforming to the Church," State of Religion among Dissenters in Virginia, p. 29n.

Scottish Presbyterian minister,[1] could not unite with the Anglican church, although he frequently attended it. He held a rather low opinion of the parish churches and their ministers, writing in his diary, "Sunday. At home reading--which is more instructive than the sermons I hear at Church,"[2] and "Sunday. At home with my family, for we have no place to go to, to hear instruction. The sermons we hear in Church have no tendency to lead us to Christ of vital religion."[3] It is not surprising, therefore, to find Gordon a leader in establishing a Presbyterian congregation in Lancaster County. There is every indication that this instruction he provided himself and his family at home on Sundays was excellent, for Gordon had a large library including contemporary and classical literary masterpieces and a fine collection of Protestant sermons and theological treatises.[4] He carefully instructed his and the neighboring children in the Longer and Shorter Catechisms, and watched their progress with pride and pleasure.[5]

True to Davies' advice on the duties of slaveholders to their slaves, Gordon took pains over the salvation of their souls as well as their physical and material well-being. He read sermons to his Negroes and took them to meetings, especially when an ordained Presbyterian minister visited. He distributed books among them, and James Creswell, his children's tutor, taught the Gordon slaves and others how to read.[1] Gordon recorded with delight the increasing number of Negro communicants at the Presbyterian congregation as the years went by.

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[1] Armistead Gordon, "Colonel James Gordon . . . ,"

[2] Gordon Diary, 17 June 1759. [3] *Ibid*., 8 June 1760.

[4] Will of Col. James Gordon, Lancaster County Will Book #20, p. 45, microfilm copy, Virginia State Library, Archives Division.

[5] Gordon Diary, 31 January 1762.

Supported by the constant interest and efforts of James Gordon, Presbyterianism continued to expand into a significant movement in the Northern Neck. Hanover Presbytery was able to send a good supply of ministers after Davies left Virginia. In 1759 a Mr. Martin preached four sermons to the group in three days.[2] In September John Todd arrived for communion and presented a petition from the group for supplies to the presbytery in October. In December the presbytery sent William Kirkpatrick, synodical supply from New Brunswick Presbytery, and James Hunt, a ministerial candidate,[3] and in April 1760 Todd visited again for preaching and communion.[4] Hunt returned in October and again in December, bringing James Caldwell, "who gave us the best sermon ever heard in these parts" according to Gordon.[1] Hunt remained in the Northern Neck until April serving the Lancaster and Northumberland congregations, and was a frequent guest in the Gordon home. After his departure the members of the congregation signed a call for him.[2] When Hunt returned in July however, Gordon suddenly had doubts about his suitability as pastor of the congregation. He discussed this with others who preferred Caldwell or a young candidate James Waddell, and after many long talks with Hunt himself, Hunt withdrew from the position. Hunt's supporters blamed the affair on Gordon, so Gordon was pleased to learn that John Todd supported his position.[3]

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[1] _Ibid._, 15 July, 23 August, 24 September 1759; 16 August 1761.

[2] Gordon Diary, 1-4 July 1759. This was probably John Martin, who may have had to leave his Cherokee mission because of the war.

[3] _Ibid._, 23 September, 8 December 1759; Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 4 December 1759.

[4] Gordon Diary, 25 May-1June 1760.

On many Sundays when the presbytery could not supply them with a minister, the Northern Neck Presbyterians conducted their own services, as did hundreds of similar congregations in America. Many of these were led by James Creswell, who tutored Gordon's children and others in the area while reading for the ministry.[4] Others in the congregation led services, particularly

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[1] Ibid., 25 December 1760. Caldwell was born in Charlotte County, Virginia in 1734 and had recently graduated from the College of New Jersey. Hayden, Virginia Genealogies, p. 455.

[2] Gordon Diary, 1, 18 January; 22 February; 1, 2, 29 March; 2, 12 April 1761.

[3] Ibid., July and September 1761.

[4] Ibid., 24 June 1759; 9 March 1760; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 87.

Colonel Richard Selden, a prominent Lancaster planter,[1] and John Mitchell, also of an important local family.

The Presbyterians did not have an easy time establishing themselves in the Northern Neck, for they met with considerable opposition from the established church and from leading local citizens. At Lancaster County Court on 20 May 1757 John Mitchell and Thomas Carter were allowed to build a meeting house on Mitchell's land "as a place for Public Worship of God, according to the practice of Protestant Dissenters of the Presbyterian Denomination."[2] The following March, however, the court revoked the action, declaring they had learned Virginia law forbade the preaching of anyone not conformable to the Church of England.[3] We do not know where the justices received such information, and they ignored the action of the General Court itself in licensing dissenting ministers. They were also out of step with other county courts that had licensed meeting houses. The dissenters built a meeting house anyhow, thirty by sixty feet, and continued to hold services, to the disgust of certain preachers of the established church.

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[1] "Selden Family," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, Vol. V (April 1897), pp. 265-266. Selden married Mary Ball, daughter of Maj. James Ball, an extensive landholder.

[2] Quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 94, from a MS in the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

[3] David Currie and John Leland to Commissary Thomas Dawson, 12 April 1758. Quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 95.

Much of this opposition to the Presbyterians was led by Colonel Edwin Conway (1682-1763), sometime vestryman of Christchurch Parish, justice of Lancaster County, Lieutenant-Colonel of the militia, and burgess from 1710 to 1742.[1] Conway was, in addition, the father of James Gordon's first wife, but this relationship in no way prevented the old gentleman from defending the prerogatives of his church against inroads by dissenters. In March 1758 Conway wrote the commissary complaining of Davies' distribution of a pamphlet among the Negroes, and sometime that year he drew up a petition to the assembly claiming the dissenters had preached illegally in Lancaster, and urging restrictions upon their open-air services.[2] Conway was forced to drop his opposition to the building of a meeting house when Benjamin Waller, Clerk of the General Court, wrote him that dissenters were permitted this by the Act of Toleration.[3] Conway persisted in opposing the Presbyterians in other ways however. He wrote letters about religion to Gordon and his daughter Nancy (Conway's granddaughter) and to Thomas Carter, an active Presbyterian, and a consultation among these three gentlemen only put Conway "in a great rage." The following year he raised the price of tobacco on Gordon after twenty years, causing Gordon to comment, "As I can't be of his way of thinking in religion, he seems to take opportunity to hurt my interest."[1]

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[1] "Conway Family," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, Vol. XI (April 1904), 264-267.

[2] Conway to Dawson, 3 March 1758, Dawson Papers, Library of Congress; Petition to Virginia Assembly from Lancaster County, 1758, quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 89n.

[3] Gordon Diary, 9 January 1759.

The ministers of the established church rarely missed an opportunity to cast aspersions upon the Presbyterians, and Gordon, who often attended their services when the Presbyterians had none, notes several occasions in which David Currie in particular attacked the dissenters from the pulpit. Gordon, as a vestryman of Christchurch Parish finally spoke to Currie about this and noted "he endeavored to excuse himself, but could not do it in my opinion."[2] Adam Menzies, minister of St. Stephen's Parish in Northumberland County attempted to get involved in a dispute with Samuel Davies shortly after one of Davies' visits to the Northern Neck, and soon after this incident Menzies and Currie were involved in the reading of a farcical play deriding dissenters in a local tavern.[3] Another weapon which the Anglican ministers used was an appeal to class snobbery. By identifying the Presbyterians with rabble, some ministers hoped to discourage leading citizens from joining the dissenters, and not without success.[1]

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[1] Ibid., 17 July, 10 August 1759; 28 February 1760.

[2] Ibid., 29 October 1759. See also entries for 26 August, 7 October 1759 and 26 May, 30 December 1760.

[3] Ibid., 9 April, 25 April, 18 May 1759.

The Lancaster County dissenters' long search for a permanent minister was most agreeably solved early in 1762 when the congregation extended an invitation to James Waddell to spend some time among them. During April and May he preached at all meeting houses in the area, conducted funerals, and made sick calls. Gordon noted that "the people seem much delighted with him."[2] At the end of May a call for Waddell was signed, but two members held out, and he would not accept it unless the decision were unanimous.[3] Waddell returned to serve the congregation during the summer months after his ordination, and at the presbytery meeting in October 1762 he accepted the call from Lancaster and Northumberland.[4] At the next meeting of the Virginia General Court in April 1763, Waddell appeared in Williamsburg to take the oaths required by law. The following month he appeared before David Currie and Adam Menzies to read an assent to the Articles of Religion.[5]

The choice of Waddell was extremely fortunate, as he served the congregation well for over a decade. Waddell was born in Ulster in 1739 and came to White Clay Creek, Pennsylvania with his parents. A childhood accident left one hand paralyzed, so his father determined to educate the lad. He sent him to Samuel Finley's academy at Nottingham to learn the classics. From there young Waddell went to John Smith's academy at Pequea, Pennsylvania as a teacher. On a journey to South Carolina where he hoped to settle, Waddell stopped in Hanover to visit Davies. He was so influenced by the great preacher that he stayed in the area, abandoning plans to study medicine, and instead took up the study of theology while helping teach at Todd's school in Louisa County. In April 1761 he was licensed by Hanover Presbytery.[1]

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[1] Ibid., 26 May 1760. Although Gordon here expresses fear that the campaign was a success, there were in fact several prominent Lancastrians among the dissenters in addition to himself.

[2] Ibid., 25 April 1762. [3] Ibid., 30 May, 7 June 1762.

[4] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 7 October 1762.

[5] Gordon Diary, 11 April, 20 May 1763.

In 1761 the Lancaster congregation needed a new place of worship. Two years earlier the Presbyterians in Northumberland County, led by William Downman, had subscribed 15,700 pounds of tobacco for their new meeting house[2] but now the Lancastrians, under Gordon's guidance, decided to hold a lottery to raise the Ł300 needed for their meeting house. In January 1762 tickets were distributed to managers in several areas, including John Todd. The drawing at Lancaster Court House on 30 June 1762 was a success, in spite of the fact that Gordon noted there were "both open & hidden enemies to our lottery."[1]

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[1] James Waddel Alexander, Memoir of the Rev. James Waddel, D.D. (n.p., 1880), pp. 5-12. Reprinted from the Watchman of the South (Richmond, 1844).

[2] Gordon Diary, 19 July 1759. William Downman in 1747 married Ellen Ball Chichester, a widow whose son Richard Chichester later married James Gordon's eldest daughter Ann. Downman was a prominent local planter. "Downman Family," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, Vol. XVIII (October 1909), pp. 138-141.

The new minister and congregational trustees James Gordon, William Tayloe, and Richard Chichester, all well-to-do planters,[2] took several steps to place the congregation in a strong financial position. In October 1761 they arranged to purchase land for a glebe. The deed was signed in November 1763 for 204 acres purchased from Richard Selden for Ł130.[3] That same month Waddel succeeded in obtaining Ł600 in bonds for the maintenance of a minister, and Gordon convinced Richard Selden to give a slave to the congregation,[4] perhaps as a servant for the minister, or possibly to hire out his labor as a source of income for the church.

The congregation had increased gradually but steadily in the five years in which we have Gordon's diary to follow its progress, and included a cross section of Tidewater society from wealthy planters like Gordon and Selden to the sizeable representation of slaves who were communicants,[1] but the majority of the members were small planters and artisans. In September 1759 Todd administered communion to fifty-three persons; three years later 103 communicants were at the table.[2] This growth continued under Waddel's pastorate, for in April 1763 there were ninety whites and twenty-three Negroes at communion,[3] and Gordon commented in his journal that larger and larger groups appeared to hear Waddel's excellent sermons. By September one hundred fifteen whites and eighty-five Negroes appeared for communion, and there fifty or sixty young people examined in their catechism.[4]

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[1] Gordon Diary, 22 September, 17 December 1761; 9 January, 15 January, 13 March, 29, 30 June 1762.

[2] Col. William Tayloe was a wealthy, well-connected Lancaster planter. Ida Lee, Abstracts of Lancaster County, Virginia Wills, 1653-1800 (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1959), p. 216. Chichester, step-son of Downman above, and son-in-law of James Gordon, was of another prominent Lancaster family. "Downman Family," pp. 141n.

[3] This parcel purchased included the original tract the group planned to buy from Cornelius DeForrest in 1761 and two additional tracts which had belonged to Joseph and Thomas Chattin. Lancaster County Deeds and Wills, Book #17 (1763-1764), p. 28, Virginia State Library microfilm; Gordon Diary, 19 July 1759.

[4] Gordon Diary, 17, 20 November 1763.

In the late summer 1763 the dissenters in the Northern Neck were particularly pleased to have George Whitefield among them on his sixth voyage to America, and his appearance may have produced the very high turnout for the sacrament the next month. He came directly from England to Virginia where "Christian friends, whom I never before heard of, were prepared to receive me";[5] those friends were Gordon and Waddel. Gordon recorded on

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[1] _Ibid_., 27 December 1760; 1 November 1761.

[2] _Ibid_., 23 September 1759; 6 June 1762.

[3] _Ibid_., 23 April 1763.

[4] _Ibid_., 11 September, 26 September 1763.

[5] Tyerman, _Life of the Rev. George Whitefield_, II, 468.

26 August, "This evening I had the comfort of receiving a letter from Rev. George Whitefield, who landed this day at Urbana."[1] Gordon and Waddel crossed the river to Urbanna the following morning and brought Whitefield to Lancaster. The great revivalist preached to large crowds on 28 and 30 August. Whitefield had planned to depart on 3 September but it rained too hard, so he stayed and preached again on the 4th to a crowd so large that Waddel had to ask the Negroes to leave the meeting house to make room for the whites.[2]

Waddel continued in his ministry in the Northern Neck until 1766. In October 1767 he married James Gordon's daughter Mary, and Gordon helped the young couple get well settled before he died the following February.[3] We have few personal records of Waddel to give us such insight into his character as we have from Samuel Davies' correspondence and sermons, for Waddel destroyed his manuscripts before his death.[4] On the whole his ministry seems to have been successful, but a letter printed in the Virginia Gazette in 1768 serves to illustrate a type of prejudice Waddel encountered.

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[1] Gordon Diary, 26 August 1763.

[2] Ibid., 28 August-4 September 1763. From Lancaster Whitefield took a boat for Philadelphia. Tyerman, Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, II, 468.

[3] Hayden, Virginia Genealogies, pp. 249-250.

[4] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 372.

One Sunday the Reverend Isaac William Giberne of Lunenburg Parish, Richmond County, did not appear to preach, so the congregation asked Waddel, who happened to be present, to fill the pulpit. He obliged, and the outraged Giberne cruelly attacked him in a sermon, calling Waddel a "pickpocket, dark-lantern, moonlight preacher and enthusiast," and urged "lovers of faith and truth" to bring the new-light vagrant who "belched out his nonsense and ignorance" to the whipping post "to be dealt with according to law."[1]

Waddel replied to this verbal attack with a letter in the Virginia Gazette stating that as a Presbyterian minister on good behavior he was subject to protection by the civil government; that he subscribed to the Articles of Religion as allowed in the toleration act, and because he had preached from Giberne's pulpit by invitation, he had not acted illegally. Waddel observed that by questioning the judgment of his parishioners in inviting a Presbyterian to preach, Giberne was insulting them. He added that "you ought to consider that though they be obliged to pay you, they are not obliged in the same sense to hear you," which was hitting the established church where it hurt. Waddel closed by recommending the 75th canon of the Church of England to Giberne, which required him to excel in purity of life as an exemplary Christian, and the 53rd canon which ordered him to "abstain from bitter invectives and scurrilous language against persons."[1]

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[1] James Waddel to the Rev. Mr. W. G. of Lunenburg Parish in Richmond, 21 July 1768. (These are Waddel's quotations from Giberne's sermon which he included in this letter published in the Virginia Gazette.) Quoted from Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 373-374.

The printing of this letter in the Gazette is indicative of the remarkable change of attitude toward dissenters in the preceding twenty years. The fact that Anglicans invited this Presbyterian to preach in their church indicates a change of attitude on the part of the layman in Virginia which is further strengthened by their ignoring Giberne's pleas to take legal action against Waddel. And the very fact that Waddel felt free to upbraid publicly a minister of the established church and recommend the canons of his own church to this man would seem to indicate not only a climate of free expression in Virginia, but to demonstrate that the Presbyterians occupied a position of respect within the colony. It is hard to imagine that Samuel Davies could ever have published a letter such as this in the Virginia Gazette.

Within a few years the Presbyterian congregations in the Northern Neck, like those in Hanover before them, had begun to decline. By 1771 the three most respected leaders there, James Gordon, William Tayloe, and Richard Selden, had died.[2] Many of the sons of founders such as these, as well as other members of the congregation were moving to new lands in the piedmont and Shenandoah Valley, and few new converts appeared to replace them. Waddel himself found the Tidewater climate unpleasant and became increasingly subject to attacks of fever, so he too determined to move west in 1777.[1] For three years the congregations of the Northern Neck were not mentioned in the presbytery minutes, but in 1780 they called John Montgomery as their minister.[2] He declined, and the following year Waddel requested supplies for his former congregation.[3] The following spring James Mitchel, a ministerial candidate was appointed to supply there for six weeks but could not, so that the Northern Neck had virtually no services of a minister that entire year.[4] In 1784 John Blair, who had come to Hanover County to operate a Presbyterian academy there and was about to assume the pastorate of Davies' former congregation, was urged by the presbytery to work in Lancaster and Northumberland, but the records do not show whether or not this assignment was carried out.

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[1] Waddel to the Rev. Mr. W. G. from Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 374.

[2] Lee, Abstracts of Lancaster Wills, pp. 198, 216.

By the end of the revolution, the Presbyterian church was no longer a significant denomination in the Northern Neck. The church had been unable to provide a permanent minister to rebuild the dwindling congregations, and the Baptists, who were easily able to provide their lay ministers for that purpose, had stepped in to fill the gap. Presbyterian focus and strength had decidedly shifted to the south and west of Virginia.

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 375.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 31 October 1777, 25 April 1780.

[3] *Ibid.*, 23 October 1781.

[4] *Ibid.*, 21 May, 22 October 1782.

The third area of major Presbyterian strength in eastern Virginia lay in the Southside, the area east of the Blue Ridge and south of the James River, particularly in present-day Cumberland, Charlotte, and Prince Edward counties. In contrast to the relatively short periods in which Presbyterianism was a significant movement in Hanover and the Northern Neck, the denomination established itself early in the Southside and remains strong to the present. Although Presbyterianism appeared in the area by 1740 through the settlement of two colonies of Scots-Irish from Pennsylvania at Cub Creek in Charlotte and Buffalo in Prince Edward,[1] the most important accomplishments of the denomination occurred as a result of the work of New Light preachers there shortly after the peak of the Hanover revival.

Although the Buffalo Presbyterian group adhered to the Old Side in the church schism under the leadership of their venerable pastor John Thomson,[2] they nonetheless received the New Light evangelist William Robinson when the Presbytery of

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[1] Supra, Chapter II.

[2] For Thomson's activities against the New Lights see supra, Chapter III.

New Brunswick sent him to Virginia in 1743. Two years later John Blair, younger brother of Davies' teacher Samuel Blair, preached at Cub Creek and also to an interested group north of the Appomattox River in present Cumberland County.[1]

Thus, three groups in the area were ready to receive Samuel Davies when he toured Virginia in 1747, and the Cumberland group must have expressed particular interest, for in November 1748 when Davies applied for additional meeting houses in Louisa, Goochland, and Caroline counties, he requested, but did not receive, one for Cumberland. Nonetheless, Davies visited the area whenever possible in the next five years and James Davenport also preached there in the summer of 1750 when he was a synodical supply to Virginia.[2] A fourth congregation in this area was formed about 1750 when Davies converted a member of the established church, Littlejoe Morton and his wife. Morton was a land agent for the holdings of the Randolph family under whose aegis many Tidewater people had settled in the area, and he interested many of his neighbors on the Little Roanoke and Briery Rivers in Presbyterianism.[3]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 126, 133; Joseph D. Eggleston, "The Beginnings of Old Briery and Cumberland Churches," reprint from the Farmville Herald, 13 April 1934, p. 20 in Virginia Historical Society Library.

[2] Eggleston, "Beginnings of Old Briery and Cumberland . . . ," p. 21.

[3] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 50.

Upon Davies' request to the synod for supplies in the back country, Robert Henry was sent to the area in 1751 and 1752. A Scot by birth, Henry had joined the Presbytery of New York after graduation from the College of New Jersey in 1751. He took up residence in the Cub Creek area in 1752 and served that Scots-Irish congregation as well as the newly-formed Briery congregation of former Anglicans, but he was not formally installed until June 1755 after Davies returned from Great Britain.[1] Little is known of Henry as he left no personal papers. Foote describes him as a passionate, jovial man who was ardently pious, and an animated, vehement preacher.[2]

Henry was joined in his work in the Southside when Cumberland congregation to the north received its first minister, John Wright, in March 1754. Wright, also a Scot, lived in Virginia as a youth and Samuel Davies is said to have influenced him to study for the ministry at Princeton, where President Aaron Burr was especially fond of him. Wright must have had a congenial personality and a sharp mind, for Jonathan Edwards, who probably met Wright through his father-in-law Burr, had him as a houseguest for the summer of 1752 and recommended him highly as a correspondent to a Scottish minister.[3]

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[1] Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 650-652; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 49.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 51.

[3] Jonathan Edwards to the Rev. John Erskine, 7 July 1752. Quoted in ibid., II, 52-53.

The Cumberland dissenter group, which consisted of about twenty families in 1752, had been visited by Robinson, Cumming, Finley, Davenport, John Brown, Robert Henry, and Davies before Wright's arrival. However, Wright reported that there were only four or five "pious Souls" and "hardly any Tincture of Enthusiasm" when he arrived. They were "a very ignorant People, destitute of any Kind of religious Knowledge, tho' mostly of ye Church of England Persuasion." After he had been there nine weeks the people called him as their pastor, and arranged a suitable living. At the New Castle presbytery meeting Wright accepted the call and settled in Cumberland in October 1754.[1] He was installed the last Sunday in July 1755 by Davies and Henry.

The work of Henry and Wright in this area met with immediate success as their congregations experienced the full impact of the Great Awakening. Signs of the revival began in June 1755 when John Todd preached five sermons at the time of Henry's installation and wrote to George Whitefield that "believers were more quickened, and sinners were much alarmed."[2] Six weeks later when Wright was installed he estimated that

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[1] John Wright to the Rev. David Bostwick in New York, 4 September 1761. MSS collection, Presbyterian Historical Society; Eggleston, "Beginnings of Old Briery and Cumberland Churches," p. 20.

[2] John Todd to George Whitefield, 26 June 1755. "Old Documents," Evangelical and Literary Magazine and Missionary Chronicle, IV (October 1821), p. 552.

2,000 attended his service, and that 180 took communion, 80 of whom were converts from the Church of England.[1]

The times were favorable to a revival of religion in the summer of 1755, for Virginia was suffering from the physical effects of a severe drought and the psychological shock of Braddock's defeat just three weeks before Wright was installed. Wright took advantage of the mood of the times and noted that

> People generally begin to believe the divine government, and that our judgements are inflicted for our sins! They now hear sermons with solemnity and attention; they acknowledge their wickedness and ignorance, and believe that the New Light clergy and adherents are right.[2]

Wright's ministry was further aided by the fact that at such a distance from Williamsburg and in the midst of crisis, government officials did not prevent him from preaching anywhere he pleased.[3]

During the following year both Wright and Henry conducted highly successful revivals in their congregations. Wright wrote that "Those who were first taken among ye whites tho' none of ye Grandees yet were accounted Sensible Honest People, and when ye Husband or Wife was awakened, ye same ordinarily happened to his or her Consort. . . ."[4] The revival in the Southside reached its peak in the summer of 1756. Davies went there to assist Henry in the administration of the sacrament and stayed thirteen days, during which he preached a dozen sermons. Two thousand attended the communion service and two hundred partook.[1] Wright received thirty to forty new communicants in July 1756 and eighty to ninety the following month. Both young ministers were particularly desirous of converting the youths in their congregations. Henry seems to have been especially successful, for Wright noted that one evening Henry had converted seventeen young people with an "occasional lecture." Wright felt the young people slow in responding to him, but by January 1757 he had converted fifty or sixty and asked a friend in Scotland to tell the young people there "that the wild Virginians may shame them."[2]

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[1] John Wright to --, 18 August 1755. Quoted in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 53-54. In his letter to David Bostwick in September 1761 Wright recollected receiving 100 new communicants at his installation.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

[4] John Wright to David Bostwick, 4 September 1761.

Both young ministers seem to have been much impressed and influenced by the work Davies was doing among the Negroes in Hanover and sought to inaugurate similar work in the Southside. By 1757 forty Negroes had joined Henry's Briery congregation, most of them probably the slaves of various of his white members. Davies sent Henry books which he received from the

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[1] Davies to John Gillies, 14 July 1756, Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 552.

[2] John Wright to the Rev. Mr. --, 20 January 1757, "Old Documents," Evangelical and Literary Magazine, IV (November 1821), pp. 572-573.

SPRK in London, which Henry then distributed among his black converts and probably taught them how to read.[1]

Early in 1756 Davies sent a parcel of books from England to Wright who "is very laborious in his endeavors to instruct negroes, and has set up two or three schools among them, where they attend before or after sermon. . . ."[2] That year Wright baptized several Negroes who "were the most honest upright leading Men among their Tribes which greatly contributed to spread Religion among their fellow Slaves." When Wright received his next parcel of books, twenty Negroes appeared at his home to ask for them, and the efforts at learning to read increased their interest in religion according to Wright.[3] Wright's work among the Negroes continued at a high peak. In 1759 he baptized and received into communion twenty slaves belonging to a Colonel Cary. By mid-1761 he estimated he had "about 300 Ethiopians solicitously engaged after ye great Salvation!" That summer he baptized fifty and had another one hundred under catechetical instruction. Not all in the county looked benignly upon Wright's efforts, for he noted that

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 5; Gaines, Cub Creek Church, p. 21; Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, p. 652.

[2] Davies to --, 2 March 1756, quoted in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 54-55.

[3] Wright to David Bostwick, 4 September 1761. Wright wrote that he had become a member of the SPRK and had distributed over 1300 books to poor whites and Negroes in Cumberland County.

"Opposition has been & still is violently strong,"[1] but he does not say from what quarters the opposition came, whether Anglican or Presbyterian, or both, or what form it took.

The successes of Henry and Wright among the whites in general, including many former Anglicans, among young people, and among Negroes are certainly an important part of the Great Awakening in Virginia, but they also owe something to the particularly advantageous position of the Presbyterian church in the area, because the established church was weak here. All of Prince Edward County, formed in 1754, was in St. Patrick's Parish, whose vestry at their second meeting in December 1755 received the Reverend James Garden as their minister. Henry had been there for three full years by then, and John Thomson had served the Buffalo congregation for nearly twelve years before Henry came, so the established church was a relative latecomer to the scene. Charlotte County, to the south, where Henry's Cub Creek congregation was located, had been part of one large parish including all of present Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Charlotte Counties. Between 1748 and 1757 when Charlotte County was set aside, the vestry of this large parish had experienced difficulty in obtaining a minister, and during that time the Presbyterian church had secured the allegiance of a very large part of the local population.[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 62-63; Gaines, Cub Creek Church, pp. 38-40.

Although both Wright and Henry worked diligently to establish the Presbyterian Church so firmly in their area, neither remained to see more than the first fruits of their efforts. In the latter 1750's Wright had severe health problems and was unable to take care of his territory which included all of present Cumberland and Powhatan counties, with two meeting houses, one probably located between Cumberland Court House and the Appomattox River to the south, and the other along Willis Creek, which emptied into the James to the north. In 1757 Wright's health obliged him to quit preaching and leave the area temporarily "to be out of the temptation of preaching--but could not keep away long; and upon my return must preach or sink into melancholy."[1] In January 1758 Hanover Presbytery declared Wright's congregation vacant until May, hoping to give him time to recover.[2] After his return however, the two congregations seem to have been too much for him, for in July 1758 the presbytery, meeting in Cumberland County, dismissed Willis Creek from its pastoral relation with Wright and permitted them to join two congregations along the James in a call to Henry Patillo.[3]

In 1759 two efforts were made by groups within Wright's congregation to establish another congregation presumably under

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[1] Wright to John Gillies, 14 November 1757, "Old Documents," Evangelical and Literary Magazine, IV (November 1821), p. 576.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 25 January 1758.

[3] Ibid., 13 July 1758.

Wright's care,[1] which would indicate an improvement in his condition. However, the following year he became involved in a series of personal difficulties and personality clashes which led to his dismissal from the presbytery and left his congregation abandoned.[2] Charges levelled at Wright by two other ministers were dismissed by the presbytery in the fall of 1761,[3] but the following spring members of his own congregation complained of his drunkenness, and after a long investigation the presbytery suspended him from the ministry.[4]

Henry continued his ministry in Charlotte and Prince Edward Counties for several years. The fervor of the revival years had quieted and we know little of affairs in the two congregations. However, by 1766 Henry was having difficulties with his session over his salary. The presbytery ruled that if the dispute were not settled in a month they might end their pastoral relationship. This was done, for Henry notified the presbytery in April 1767 that he had accepted a call in North Carolina, but he died at Cub Creek the following month.[1]

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[1] Eggleston, "Beginnings of Old Briery and Cumberland Churches," pp. 26-27, from Cumberland County Deed Book #2, p. 215 and Order Book for 1759. The County Court refused to license another meeting house, but its reasons are unknown. This may have involved the establishment of Deep Creek Meeting House, then in Cumberland, which is known to have existed at least as early as 1763. Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 9 November 1763.

[2] For a detailed discussion of Wright's case see infra, Chapter VII.

[3] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 8 October 1761.

[4] Ibid., 7 April, 16 June, 17 July, 7 October 1762.

In the mid-1760's the Cumberland congregation, which was vacant, and Briery, which Henry was about to leave, took similar steps to establish themselves on a sound financial basis. Support of their churches was a problem for Presbyterians in Virginia not merely because it was done on a voluntary basis in addition to the taxes they paid to support the established church, but because there was no form of charter or incorporation to enable laymen to contribute to a perpetual body, the church, rather than to the individual minister through the local session.

In an effort to remedy this financial problem, the members of Briery congregation in October 1766 proposed to elect three trustees every seven years; that the initial group of trustees purchase six slaves, three men and three women, "and that these slaves & their increase be in the care of the Trustees to raise money forever hereafter, for the benefit of a regular Presbyterian minister, to be chosen by a majority of the congregation."[2] Seventy-two subscribers pledged ₤308 to the fund, the largest sum, ₤50 coming from George Walton, one of the trustees and a wealthy planter in Prince Edward County.[1] Many prominent local figures contributed, including Clement Read, Jr., king's attorney for Prince Edward, whose father had been a vestryman and leading member of the Anglican church.[2] The first three slaves were purchased in 1768, and by 1775 when Briery obtained its first permanent minister, the congregation owned ten slaves as a result of purchase and natural increase.[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*, 15 October 1766, 1 April 1767, 11 October 1767.

[2] Session Book of Briery Church, Vol. I, pp. 8-11. Photostatic copy in Archives Division, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

In December 1767 the elders of Cumberland congregation arranged a subscription campaign similar to that held by Briery. By December 1769 twenty-eight subscribers pledged £225 to be vested with five trustees elected annually, for investment in lands and slaves to produce income for a minister's salary.[4] In spite of these efforts, the congregation was not able to attract a permanent replacement for Wright for many years, but with the services of supply ministers they remained a strong group.

Just at the time the congregations which the New Lights had worked to establish in Cumberland, Prince Edward, and

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[1] Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 76-77, 92. Walton was guardian for his nephew and namesake George Walton, Jr., who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence from Georgia. Ibid., pp. 823-824.

[2] Ibid., pp. 25, 51, 53-57.

[3] Briery Session Book, p. 12.

[4] Session Book of Cumberland Congregation. Photostatic copy in Archives Division, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

Charlotte Counties might have declined as those in Hanover had once they lost the services of a regular minister, the old side Scots-Irish Buffalo congregation acquired a new minister who was to remain thirty years and devote much of his time to preaching in vacant pulpits nearby. Buffalo had been vacant for seven years after the fiery old side defender John Thomson moved to North Carolina in 1752,[1] and was probably supplied occasionally by Donegal Presbytery in Pennsylvania and the old side Synod of Philadelphia.[2]

It seems ironic that the Southside churches should have been aided by an old side minister, but when Richard Sankey arrived in the fall of 1759 he united with Hanover Presbytery because the rival synods had healed their long-standing split the preceding year. He was accepted as a member in April 1760, and that September was installed when the presbytery convened at his meeting house.[3] Sankey, a native of Ulster and son-in-law of John Thomson, had ministered to a congregation near Carlisle, Pennsylvania since 1738. An Indian massacre there in August 1759 caused Sankey and several survivors in his congregation to join friends and relatives who had moved to the Buffalo settlement earlier. Sankey purchased a 400 acre tract there and settled down to the demanding task of establishing himself and his family and strengthening the congregation.[1] Buffalo flourished under the guidance of Sankey who also travelled diligently throughout the Shenandoah Valley and Southside preaching to vacant congregations and took an active role in presbytery affairs.[2] In October elders of the congregation purchased a tract of land, probably for a new meeting house, and the following month the established church acknowledged the success of the Presbyterians when St. Patrick's vestry decided to close its upper church building on the Buffalo River because it was "situate among the dissenters" and was not being used.[3]

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[1] John G. Herndon, "The Reverend John Thomson," pp. 44-45.

[2] Between 1754 and 1757 the Synod appointed at least 5 men to supply the back country of Virginia and Carolina for 3 month periods. Some of them probably visited the Buffalo congregation. Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 23 May 1754, 30 May 1755. Records of the Presbyterian Church, pp. 210, 213-214.

[3] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, April 1760, 24 September 1760.

Between 1755 and 1765 Presbyterian congregations sprang up all over Southside and Piedmont Virginia. There seem to be three causes of this expansion: one was the influx of Scots-Irish from Pennsylvania bringing their church with them and another was the inability of the established church to keep pace with the expansion by providing the needed services of the church in so many new localities. Most important was the energetic work of the small body of men comprising Hanover Presbytery who travelled relentlessly over the colony in response to the needs of the settlers. Of most of these burgeoning religious societies we know very little, and of their members even less. For a variety of reasons few of them developed into strong congregations and any current interest in them is limited largely to local or genealogical curiosity. They are worth mentioning however, as an indication of dissatisfaction with the established church, of interest aroused in presbyterianism by the well-publicized activities of the New Light preachers, of the numerous areas of Virginia that were settled by Scots-Irish, and of the attitude of government to an increasing body of religious dissent in the colony.

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[1] Joseph D. Eggleston, "The Buffalo Settlement and Its Makers, With an Account of Some of their Descendants," pp. 239-243; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 75-77. Sankey married Sarah, the fifth of Thomson's thirteen children, and they had five children of their own. Herndon, "The Reverend John Thomson," pp. 56-57.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, passim, 1760-1770.

[3] Eggleston, "The Buffalo Settlement and Its Makers," p. 240, taken from Prince Edward Deed Book #2, p. 227; and p. 242, from St. Patrick's Vestry Book, 10 November 1761.

Across the James from present Richmond a group of dissenters appeared in Chesterfield County, possibly as a result of the preaching of William Robinson or John Roan in the area. In 1746 Andrew Ammonet, a warden of King William Parish, asked to be removed from the vestry, and in 1748 Jacob Trabue was discharged from the vestry "as he is no longer willing to conform to the canon of the Anglican church. . . ."[1] Seven years later these two joined Dudley Brooke and William Lacy to petition the

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[1] "Vestry Book of King William Parish," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, Vol. XIII (1905), pp. 268-271.

Chesterfield court to grant them "and others of the Presbyterian denomination" permission for a meeting house on Ammonet's land.[1] Davies may have preached to the group, and in 1757 Hanover Presbytery answered their supply request.[2]

Another Presbyterian congregation in Chesterfield, composed largely of Scottish merchants in the Petersburg area, caused great concern to an Anglican minister in the county who wrote the commissary in 1758 warning him to oppose the members if they should come to Williamsburg on behalf of their unlicensed meeting house.[3] Samuel Davies and John Martin preached to a Petersburg group in 1757 and Davies returned the next year, but they are not mentioned in presbytery records again,[4] so it is possible that Parson Trask and his allies succeeded in their opposition to the dissenters.

In 1755 the court of the newly established Halifax County on the North Carolina boundary permitted a group of dissenters to build a meeting house.[5] This was probably the group which petitioned Hanover Presbytery for supplies and received them in 1757, 1758, 1759, 1761, and 1762.[1] The fact that communion was never administered there, that they never called a minister, and only requested supplies occasionally in the following twenty years indicates that the group was small and poor, with little prospect of becoming a regular church. In this respect they were typical of many groups of dissenters scattered throughout western and southern Virginia, who, because of their own meager circumstances and because of the heavy demands laid upon the ministers in the presbytery, had to be satisfied to remain small meetings.

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[1] "Historical Notes and Questions," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, Vol. VIII (October 1899), pp. 128-129.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 18 March 1756, 28 September 1757, 26 April 1758.

[3] George Trask to Thomas Dawson, 9 December 1758. Virginia Dawson Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 27 April 1757, 28 September 1757, 27 September 1758.

[5] Halifax Pleas Book #1, 1752-1755, p. 490, Archives Division, Virginia State Library. The house was to be built of Difficult Creek, a tributary of the Staunton River.

Other congregations from which the presbytery received requests for supplies included Meherrin, which was probably located in Brunswick or Lunenburg County along the Meherrin River. The group was active from 1756-1768 then disappears from the records,[2] which may indicate that many members moved away or joined the Baptists who were active in the area around 1770. A congregation called Reedy Spring, which may have been on Reedy Creek near Lunenburg Courthouse, received supplies in 1764 and 1765, but it too passes from the records.[3] From 1756-1768 requests for supplies came to the presbytery from Amelia County and were often filled, but the county does not recur in presbytery records during the revolutionary decade.[1] A meeting house located on the Sandy River, probably in Prince Edward County, is mentioned frequently in presbytery records between 1768-1776,[2] and in 1767 and 1769 the presbytery supplied a group on Allen's Creek in Mecklenburg County,[3] both of which disappear from the records.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 28 September 1757, 26 April 1758, 5 October 1759, 9 October 1761, 7 April 1762, 13 October 1774, 1 May 1776.

[2] Ibid., 1756-1768, passim.

[3] Ibid., 3 October 1764, 1 May 1765.

In addition to these groups in the Southside, several new congregations appeared in eastern Virginia north of the James,but failed to develop into permanent churches. In western Goochland County a congregation located at the Byrd along the James, probably organized by Davies or Todd, was active until 1763 when the name disappears from the minutes.[4] Another group active at the same time was referred to as Mackie's. Its location remains a mystery, but the fact that John Todd was the only supply sent there for three years would indicate it may have been in Louisa or Goochland.[5] In 1767 a congregation of Presbyterians was formed in Williamsburg and requested supplies from both the presbytery and synod. Hanover appointed James Waddel to preach there two Sundays, and the synod sent two men that year. The fate of this group in the capital of Anglican Virginia remains a mystery, for they are never again mentioned.[1] Groups from Spotsylvania and Orange Counties petitioned for supplies in the 1760's, but again, nothing further is known of them.

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[1] Ibid., November 1756, April and June 1757, October 1762, May 1763, and October 1768.

[2] Ibid., October 1768, April 1769, October 1774, April 1775, May 1776.

[3] Ibid., April 1767 and April 1769.

[4] Ibid., 27 April 1757, 28 September 1757, 7 April 1762, 9 November 1762, 6 October 1763.

[5] Ibid., 27 September 1758, 26 April 1759, 5 October 1759, April 1760.

Of these many hopeful starts few permanent congregations developed, but the blame for this cannot be placed on government hostility, with the possible exception of the Petersburg group which seems to have built a meeting house without a license, and which the local parson tried to thwart. The other groups failed because they were too small or too poor, or because they could not obtain the services of an ordained minister often enough to sustain them as a dissenting body. In some cases their members probably moved away, for the frontier society was a fluid one. Some of the members may have been aroused by the New Light preaching of Davies and his co-workers in the early years of the presbytery and then may have returned to the established church once their initial enthusiasm cooled. Others, who were truly dissatisfied with the established church but could not get the ministers they desired from the Presbyterians probably joined the Baptists groups which appeared all over Virginia in the years just before the Revolution.

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[1] Ibid., 1 April 1767; Synod of New York and Philadelphia Minutes, 28 May 1767, Records of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 374-375.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 4 May 1763, 5 October 1768.

By the time of the Revolution, Presbyterianism had largely retreated from eastern Virginia where it had made such an impact as a result of the Great Awakening. The only congregations which remained as centers of power in the denomination by 1775 were the four Southside locations of Briery, Cumberland, Cub Creek, and Buffalo which provided much of the leadership for the Presbyterians in the post-war period. But aside from these exceptions, Presbyterianism in Virginia was more and more a western phenomenon, centered among the people who for generations had nurtured Calvinism--the Scots-Irish.

VI. PRESBYTERIANS IN VIRGINIA SECULAR LIFE

The expansion of the Presbyterians in Tidewater and Southside Virginia was a significant occurrence in terms of the development of religious freedom in Virginia because the continued presence of these dissenters forced local governments and the church to recognize their right to exist under some reasonable form of toleration.

The other side of the proliferation of Presbyterianism in Virginia is the concurrent story of the immigration of the Scots-Irish to the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont. This is a story which has been told often, and occasionally well.[1] Because we are dealing here with a religious situation entirely different from the Great Awakening which Presbyterians brought into eastern Virginia, and because we are also dealing with dozens of congregations and thousands of individuals, we shall make no attempt to detail the founding of each congregation or to examine the background of each minister and the leading laymen as we did for those congregations in the east.

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[1] Especially good studies are found in Foote's Sketches of Virginia; Harold M. Wilson's Tinkling Spring: Headwaters of Freedom; and Joseph Waddell's Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, from 1726-1781, 2d ed., 1902 (Bridgewater, Va.: C. J. Carrier, 1958).

In western Virginia, Presbyterianism was the rule rather than the exception. The immigration of the Scots-Irish had been welcomed by the government in Williamsburg as a means of pushing the frontier west while providing a buffer against the Indians. In the west the newcomers were permitted to establish their own congregations which were exempted from taxes for a period of years before the established church attempted to organize active parishes.[1]

Before large groups of Presbyterians departed for Virginia, the Synod of Philadelphia sent a deputation to Governor Gooch "to ask your favour in allowing them the Liberty of their consciences, and of worshipping God in a way agreeable to the principles of their Education." Gooch replied in November 1738 that

> I have always inclined to favour the people who have lately removed from other provinces to settle on the western side of our great mountains: So you may be assured that no interruption shall be given to any minister of your profession, who shall come among them, so as they conform themselves to the rules prescribed by the Act of Toleration in England, by taking the Oaths enjoined thereby, and registering the places of their meeting and behave themselves peaceably towards the government.[2]

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[1] Freeman H. Hart, The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), p. 34.

[2] Quoted in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 74.

On their part, the Presbyterians willingly complied. The records of Augusta County contain numerous examples of their ministers taking the oaths, and of various laymen registering meeting houses.[1]

At the outbreak of the Revolution, of the five valley counties, the Scots-Irish formed the largest single ethnic group in the northernmost, Berkeley (now West Virginia) where they were 40%, and the southernmost, Botetourt at 90% and Augusta at 60%. In Dunmore County, where Germans predominated, Scots-Irish were a mere 20%, and Frederick County was evenly divided among English, Scots-Irish, and Germans.[2]

The transplanted Ulsterites formed religious societies everywhere they settled and as soon as practicable built meeting houses. Between 1740 and 1775 dozens were erected. In Berkeley County were those called Opecquon, Tuscarora, Shephardstown, Cool Springs, Cedar Creek, Elk Branch, and Bullskin. In Frederick were Back Creek, Falling Waters, and Round Hill. The two settled pastors in the northern valley were Hugh Vance, graduate of the College of New Jersey in 1767, at Tuscarora and Back

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[1] Augusta Order Book III, p. 326 records that on 21 August 1752, "On motion of Richard Woods, on behalf of himself and others, ordered that a Presbyterian Meeting House in Forks of James River, in this County, be and is hereby recorded a Public Place of Worship." In Augusta Order Book II, p. 76 on February 1748, "Rev. Alexr. Cummings, a dissenting minister, took the oaths required."

[2] Hart, Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, chart, page 6.

Creek, and John Hogg of the class of 1749 who settled at Opecquon in 1760.[1] All of these congregations were under the care of the Presbytery of Donegal in Pennsylvania.

In the southern part of the valley the meeting houses included Tinkling Spring and Augusta Stone under John Craig, Cook's Creek and Peaked Mountain under Alexander Miller then Thomas Jackson, Timber Ridge and New Providence under John Brown, and Brown's Meeting House where Charles Cummings was pastor. In addition to these congregations fortunate to have settled ministers, many congregations assembled at their meeting houses under lay leadership and depended on supplies from the Presbyteries of Donegal and Hanover and from the Synod to preach and administer the sacrament to them occasionally. These groups had meeting houses at Linville Creek, North Mountain, Mossy Creek, Hall's Meeting House, Upper and Middle Cowpastures, Upper and Lower Calfpasture, the Forks of James, and High Bridge in Augusta County. In Botetourt County new congregations were being formed as the settlers pushed south in the 1760's and 1770's. These included Tinker's Creek, Roan Oak, Botetourt Court House, Kartmill's, McCrary's, Tinkling Spring on the Catawba, Craig's Creek, Denean, New Antrim, New Derry, New Dublin, Boiling Spring, Unity Meeting House on Reed Creek, and

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[1] Ibid., p. 36; Robert G. Albion and Leonidas Dodson, Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776, Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army around New York (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1934), pp. 11, 14, 17, 29-33.

Sinking Spring and Ebbing Spring on the Holsten River.[1] Many of these newer congregations were much smaller than the older established congregations in Berkeley and Augusta, and only a few developed into regular churches.[2]

Clearly the Presbyterian church in Virginia did not lack adherents in either the east or the west. What it desperately needed by 1770 was a dozen more ordained ministers to serve the congregations appealing for supplies. The efforts of the Presbyterians to found schools at this time were directed in part towards preparing young men for ministerial studies. Hanover Presbytery made a strong effort to assign supplies to congregations, and nearly every member of the presbytery was assigned a preaching tour every year. Donegal Presbytery attempted to meet the needs not only of the congregations in Berkeley and Frederick under its care, but of those farther south as well. Among regular members who spent considerable time in Virginia were John McCreary from Christiana, Delaware, David Bard from Bedford, Pennsylvania, and Robert Keith. In addition, many ministerial candidates who were recent graduates of the College of New Jersey were assigned extensive preaching tours along the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia as part of their training. In the two years preceding the Revolution these travellers in Virginia included John McKnight, Andrew Hunter, Jr., William Linn, James McConnel, Philip Fithian, Samuel McCorkle, William Graham, and Robert Archibald. In time, McKnight, McConnel and Graham settled in the colony.[1]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 1755-1775, passim. Also, see Map

[2] In 1768 John Craig visited these groups in behalf of the presbytery to ascertain their size, needs, and ability to support a minister. The smallest had 36 families as members, and the largest 75. Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 12 April 1769. In contrast, at Tuscarora congregation in Berkeley County, 98 adult males signed a petition to the General Assembly in 1776, and from the Buffalo congregation of Scots-Irish in Prince Edward County, 153 adult males signed a similar petition that year. Virginia Religious Petitions collection, Archives Division, Virginia State Library.

Fithian's journal of his tours in Virginia provides a glimpse of the diversity of living among the Scots-Irish frontiersmen. At Opecquon he preached in May 1775 to what he termed "a large, and genteel Society--Mostly Irish." In January the following year Fithian preached to a group representing the other social extreme at the Lower Cowpasture meeting house, which was a small, rude, open log house on the bank of the James, whose members claimed they could not afford to build a better one.[2] In Augusta County, Fithian commented of his host, James Allen of Stone Meeting House

> He has plenty of food for horses; he lives elegantly--has plenty of Meat for me; And has two Daughters of Taste. . . .

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[1] Albion (ed.), Fithian Journal 1775-6, *passim*.

[2] Albion chooses to call Opecquon "the most important Presbyterian congregation in the whole Shenandoah" but does not define the standards of his definition. Fithian Journal 1775-6, p. 13n. This writer feels that two or three of the Augusta congregations boasted members who were of more consequence in the political, economic, military, and religious aspects of Virginia affairs in the 1770's, pp. 14, 158-159.

> Women of taste born & educated in Augusta! Mr Allen has Books. The Volumes of the ancient Universal History, Reynold's Letters against the Deist--& many others.[1]

Few lived as "elegantly" as the Allen family, although several of the Scots-Irish amassed large landholdings and built handsome homes which, while not attempting elegance on the scale of Tidewater plantations such as Shirley or Westover, were comfortable homes with tasteful furniture, rugs, books, and an occasional portrait. The style of living for most did not approach such luxury, for it was the rare family that ate on chairs at a table rather than on benches at a hewn log, and over half slept on the floor or in bunks instead of beds. From his study of wills filed in the valley counties prior to the Revolution, Freeman Hart found that the average value of property in the Scots-Irish areas, consisting chiefly of farm equipment and livestock, was £150.[2] But the accumulation of labor with each passing year made life in the valley more comfortable.

If it were possible to compile a statistical study of each Presbyterian congregation in Virginia in terms of occupation, income, landholding, and political activity of the members, and compare it with the rest of the population, I think the evidence would indicate that the dissenters were a representative group of Virginians, and that the only thing which distinguished them from their neighbors was the fact that they did not adhere to the established church. The enormousness of such a task would preclude doing it even if the necessary records were available. The identity of most of the Presbyterians in Virginia, and particularly those who were not Scots-Irish, remains unknown. Very few congregation books, subscription lists, ministerial calls, or signed petitions from the colonial period remain,[1] and this is the only way we could know who actually belonged to a congregation. Only by locating each Presbyterian known from such lists in family Bibles, indentures, will books, deeds, court orders, court judgements, election polls, and occasional personal papers could we painstakingly reconstruct a profile of the Presbyterians in a particular county or congregation and compare them with their neighbors, who remained loyal to the established church. There are few instances in which such complete records remain. One such study, of the Tinkling Spring congregation in Augusta County, has been published. Similar work could be done for Buffalo and Briery congregations in Prince Edward County, Cumberland congregation in Cumberland County, and Tuscarora congregation in Berkeley County,

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 177.

[2] Hart, _Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution_, pp. 24-29.

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[1] Only 2 congregation books are extant from the eighteenth century: Briery Church, containing a historical sketch, subscription list and deaths list, but session minutes from 1793 only; and Cumberland Church, a similar book, but with session minutes dating only from 1797. Photostatic copies of both are in the Archives Division, Virginia State Library.

West Virginia.[1] Most of the members of most of the other congregations throughout Virginia are doomed to remain obscure.

Without attempting to analyze large numbers of Presbyterians in order to produce a statistical profile of their rank in Virginia society, it seems reasonable to select a few examples from among known Presbyterians in various congregations throughout the colony and indicate briefly some of their personal accomplishments. These men are known to us partly because they took an active role in church affairs, and to this extent they were "above average."

An active member of the Lancaster County congregation was Thomas Carter, whose forebearers had come to the Northern Neck in the seventeenth century, and whose plantation on the Corotoman River adjoined that of that energetic Presbyterian, James Gordon. Carter had led the movement to establish Presbyterianism in the area by petitioning the county court in 1757 for permission to build a meeting house on the land of James Mitchell. Carter took little role in politics and apparently tended his business and his family well, for in his will in 1776 Carter was able to divide among his ten surviving children, a step-daughter, and three grandsons an estate consisting of two plantations, another tract of 100 acres, seventeen Negroes, £80, and his furniture.[1]

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[1] In addition to the individuals listed in the Cumberland and Briery congregation books, we know the names of the members of Tuscarora and Buffalo congregations from petitions to the House of Burgesses and House of Delegates in 1776 and 1785. Records in these three counties are fairly complete. The model study of one congregation is Wilson's Tinkling Spring: Headwaters of Freedom, 1742-1952.

In Louisa County at John Todd's Old Providence congregation, a prominent family were the Sheltons. John Shelton had patented nearly 2,000 acres on the South Anna River in the 1720's. In 1748 his son Joseph petitioned the Council for permission to build a meeting house on his land on Owen's Creek, the site of Old Providence. Both Joseph, a bachelor whose home was "Roseneath," and his brother David of "Old Town" who was married and had four children, served as Presbyterian elders. Whether their older brothers, John and William and sister Mary Truehart of Hanover were Presbyterian we do not know. When Joseph died in 1784 he divided his considerable property among them.[2] In 1775 three Sheltons, Joseph, William, and Peter, were among the thirty-seven residents of Louisa who petitioned the Virginia Convention opposing gambling in the county which they felt was contrary to resolves of Continental Congress.[3]

In Prince Edward County Caleb and Martha Baker and their eight children who immigrated from Pennsylvania, played a prominent role in founding the Buffalo settlement around 1740. Caleb left 1400 acres to his children when he died in 1754. Their fourth son, Caleb, received 300 acres and the family home where he seems to have spent an uneventful life farming with the aid of two Negroes and raising his ten children. Caleb's youngest child, Esther, married Samuel Wallace, patentee of over 2,000 acres in the Buffalo settlement, and a difficult individual judging from his role as defendant in court cases on charges of slander against county court members, non-attendance at church, and unfair treatment of an indentured servant. Nonetheless, Wallace was appointed a constable of Prince Edward County, contributed heavily to the founding of Cumberland congregation where he may have been an elder as early as 1760, and was the father of Caleb Wallace, a leading young Presbyterian minister in Virginia on the eve of the Revolution.[1]

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[1] "Carter Genealogy," William and Mary College Quarterly, Series 1, XVIII (July 1909), pp. 47-51.

[2] Malcolm Harris, History of Louisa County (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1936), pp. 8, 10, 11, 112-113, 179, 410; Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 26 April 1758, 5 October 1759, 1 April 1767.

[3] "Virginia Legislative Papers," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIII (July 1905), pp. 47-48.

Joseph Michaux, whose father had come to Manakin as a child with the Huguenot refugees, was another respected citizen of the Southside. A man of little political activity, he inherited 1150 acres and three Negroes, prospered on his own, and left to his widow and nine children his land, £500 and thirty-seven slaves in 1807.[1] Theodorick Carter, another Presbyterian convert in the area, through work as a bridge and road surveyor and a farmer increased his moderate landholdings and three slaves of 1755 to more acreage and ten slaves by his death in 1777. Although not a wealthy man, he subscribed £9 to Cumberland congregation in 1767.[2] Daniel Allen, a Presbyterian who farmed near Cumberland Courthouse and may have practiced law, subscribed £10 to Cumberland congregation in 1767 and served as an elder there by 1776. In that year he married a Presbyterian widow from Hanover County to provide a mother for his ten children, one of whom became a prominent Presbyterian minister in Virginia after the Revolution.[3]

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[1] Joseph Eggleston, "Buffalo Settlement and Its Makers: The Baker Family," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XLIX (October 1941), pp. 311-317; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 10, 28, 54, 56, 90, 96; Cumberland Congregation Session Book, I. A Samuel Wallace attended presbytery four times in 1760-61 when the Rev. John Wright was present, so he was probably his elder. Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 1760-61.

In the society of the Shenandoah Valley, where dissent was the way of life rather than the exception, all manner of men were dissenters, from the meanest farmer grinding out a crude living for himself and his family on a small plot of hilly land to the largest landholders and speculators, merchants and manufacturers.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 16 June 1762; Cumberland Will Book #3 (1807), p. 347, microfilm copy at Virginia State Library.

[2] Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 6, 36, 39, 68, 87; Cumberland Session Book, I; Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 16 June 1762; Prince Edward County Will Book, #1, p. 205, microfilm at Virginia State Library.

[3] Allen's estate in 1805 included ten legal texts, two Latin grammars, an almanac, Bible, and Watt's hymns. Inventory, Prince Edward Will Book #2, p. 203, microfilm at Virginia State Library; "MSS of Rev. Wm. Hill, D.D.," Union Theological Seminary, Richmond.

In the mobile and expanding society of late colonial Virginia it is not surprising to find hundreds of Presbyterians who prospered materially and achieved respect among their neighbors who conformed to the established church. What is more surprising is to find these Presbyterians occupying public offices in a colony in which all officeholders were supposed to be communicants of the Church of England. Some of this was to be expected in those large areas in the west where dissenters formed an overwhelming majority of the population from the earliest settlement, and which the government in Williamsburg had always treated liberally by not interfering in their local affairs. This was not to be expected in the east, and yet, there are a number of instances where Presbyterians were elected or appointed to public office. A rigid application of the Test Act as made in England would have precluded such occurrences, but the practice in the colony seems to have been much more liberal than in the mother country.

County offices such as sheriff, deputy sheriff, justice of the peace, or constable were those most often filled by Presbyterians. In Lancaster County, in the heart of the aristocratic Tidewater, at least two Presbyterians were justices of the peace in the 1760's and 1770's; Dale Carter and James Gordon. Gordon had been a lifelong Presbyterian and was instrumental in establishing that church in the Northern Neck. Carter, however, had been at one time a vestryman of St. Mary's White Chapel

Parish before he became a Presbyterian.[1] His defection from the established church does not seem to have injured his general reputation. James and John Selden, two of the sons of Colonel Richard Selden who was an active Lancaster county Presbyterian, served that county as justices, and they too, may have been dissenters.[2]

In those Southside counties where Presbyterianism was strong, a number of dissenters served in local offices. John Morton, one of the first converts to Presbyterianism in Prince Edward County (about 1752), served as justice of the peace on commissions appointed in 1758 and 1766, and as sheriff in 1775.[3] Francis Watkins, a subscribing member of Cumberland congregation in 1767, was deputy sheriff of Prince Edward in 1766-1767 and deputy clerk of the county in 1767.[4] Samuel Ewing, a militia captain and tavern keeper from the Scots-Irish Buffalo settlement served as a justice of Prince Edward from 1754 until his death in 1761. Thomas Carter, of Briery congregation, served as "undersheriff" to Thomas Scott in 1764-1765. Three other Prince Edward officials were probably Presbyterians: William Booker, who was named a justice of the peace in 1766, William Watkins, who in 1767 took the oath of office as county escheater, and Henry Watkins, who had served as a justice since 1758 and was sheriff in 1774-1775.[1]

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[1] "Lancaster County Justices, 1680-1778," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, IX (October 1901), p. 222; "Carter Genealogy," William and Mary College Quarterly, series 1, XVIII (July 1909), pp. 47-58.

[2] Elizabeth Pierce, "Saint Marys White Chappell," Northern Neck Historical Magazine, V (December 1955), p. 387.

[3] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 17 November 1757, 4 April 1762, 16 June 1762; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 74-75, 682, 678.

[4] Cumberland Congregation Book, I; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 56-57, 108, 121, 144-150; Alice Read Rouse, The Reads and Their Relatives (Cincinnati, Ohio: Johnson & Hardin Co., 1931), pp. 388, 502.

Presbyterian officials in the valley counties were numerous. Nearly all the Scots-Irish had been raised and educated as Presbyterians. Some of them affiliated with the established church after they moved to Virginia, and the children of others as they grew up decided to join that church. Thus, if these particular Scots-Irish were appointed to office, they were not dissenters, so that an official with a name from Ulster was not always a dissenter. Most of the Scots-Irish remained Presbyterians, and it was from this group that a substantial proportion of the officials in Augusta and Botetourt counties were drawn--too many to enumerate, so a few examples should suffice to illustrate the participation of this group in local politics. Of the first county court appointed for Augusta County in 1745, it is probable that over one-half of the appointees were Presbyterian. Thirty years later the situation had changed little, for of the commission named in March 1773, nine of the twenty-seven are known Presbyterians, and six of the others were definitely Scots-Irish.[1]

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[1] Briery Session Book, I; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 39, 42, 53, 55-57, 670, 678, 682. Identification of Presbyterians is difficult. Generally those who subscribed to a congregation fund drive were members. Henry Watkins subscribed £12 to Briery in 1766 and William Watkins £10, both large gifts. However, among other significant contributors were Col. Thomas Read and Clement Read, both of the established church.

One of this large group of officials was Sampson Mathews, a prosperous Staunton merchant and ordinary keeper, who was first recommended as justice of the peace for Augusta in 1765 and served in that capacity continuously until 1780. He was active in the local militia, rising to the rank of colonel, served as Lieutenant Colonel of Augusta in 1778, and in 1780 represented Augusta County in the state Senate. Just prior to the Revolution, Mathews assisted the Presbytery in establishing an academy in the Valley.[2] During the Revolution many more Presbyterians took an active role in local politics, such as William McPheeters, an elder at Brown's Meeting House, and son of a tanner who had come to Virginia in the 1740's. In 1777 he was appointed justice of the peace and served in that capacity at least until 1790. Other offices he filled during the war included overseer of the poor, tax commissioner, and land assessor.[3]

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[1] Lyman Chalkley, Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County, 1745-1800, Vol. I (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 13, 169, taken from Order Book #1, p. 1, and Order Book #15, p. 1.

[2] Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 121, 122, 173, 177, 179, 183, 209, 217.

[3] Ibid., pp. 148, 191, 196, 202, 219, 223, 226, 481.

In addition to these numerous dissenters holding local offices, there are several examples of Presbyterians sitting in the House of Burgesses. They form a minute proportion of the total membership in that body in the quarter century prior to the Revolution, of course, and while they were in no respect leaders in the house, they were nonetheless important men in their own areas. The first of these was Colonel James Patton, "the stormy petrel of Augusta County," born in Ireland in 1692 and a prosperous merchant shipper when he settled in Augusta in 1738, where he had obtained patents for over 100,000 acres. He was instrumental in bringing settlers to the area, and his children married with other important Valley families, the Prestons and Breckenridges. Patton, a leading, if contentious, member of John Craig's Tinkling Spring congregation, served Augusta County as justice of the peace, sheriff, county lieutenant, coroner, and escheater. In 1754 his neighbors elected him to the House of Burgesses. His career there was cut short tragically the following year by a party of marauding Indians who scalped him when they invaded his lands in present Montgomery County.[1]

Another valley burgess was Israel Christian, who had come from Ireland in 1740 and kept a store in Staunton. After serving several times as a justice of the peace for Augusta, Christian was elected to the House of Burgesses in 1758 and served there until 1765. He was also a vestryman, and upon complaint the Burgesses in 1769 were obliged to dissolve the Augusta vestry because Christian and two other members refused to undergo the procedure of conformity to the established church required of vestrymen.[1]

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[1] Ibid., I, 13, 68; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 37; Lucille Griffith, The Virginia House of Burgesses, 1750-1774 (Northport, Alabama: Colonial Press, 1963), pp. 111-112.

Israel's son or nephew[2] William Christian was among the more influential younger men in the west. Although he had studied law with Patrick Henry about 1764, he was more successful in winning the hand of Henry's sister than in legal exercises. Nonetheless, this legal experience must have helped influence his neighbors on the frontier in selecting him as one of the new Fincastle County's first two representatives in the House of Burgesses in 1773. In 1775 he was joined there by his brother-in-law, Colonel Stephen Trigg. Christian was indeed well-connected by marriage, for his other two sisters married Colonel William Fleming, the distinguished surgeon and soldier, and the Reverend Caleb Wallace, a rising figure in Hanover Presbytery.[1]

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[1] "William Christian," Dictionary of American Biography, V, 96; Hart, Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, pp. 55, 48n.

[2] Sources differ as to whether William was the son of Israel or Isaac Christian. The DAB essay claims Israel as his father, while Hugh Blair Grigsby, The History of the Virginia Federal Convention of 1788 with some Account of the Eminent Virginians of that Era who were Members of the Body, Vol. II [Collections of the Virginia Historical Society, New Series, Vol. X] (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1891), pp. 51-53, claims that William was the son of Isaac.

The Lewis family was even more distinguished for the leadership it gave western Virginia. The father, John Lewis, of Donegal, Ireland,in 1732 became one of the first white settlers of Augusta County, where the family became leading members of Tinkling Spring congregation but bitter rivals of James Patton. Most of the Lewis sons made their reputations first as Indian fighters, and only later as legislators. Andrew, who had settled near the present Salem, Virginia, served Botetourt County as a justice of the peace, and was elected as a Burgess in 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775. Charles represented Augusta in the House in 1773 and 1774, but his career in politics was terminated by his death at Point Pleasant in the latter year.[2]

Of John Wilson, who served as a Burgess for Augusta for two decades, little is known. Most of his activities in the House involved claims from the French and Indian Wars, and as a delegate from the west he was a natural choice for committees dealing with military affairs at that time. After his death in 1772, he was replaced in a by-election by Charles Lewis, whom he had defeated in the 1771 poll.[1] Samuel McDowell, who lived with his wife and eleven children in that part of Augusta which later became Rockbridge, had been orphaned in 1742 when Indians killed his father. As a young man he fought in the French and Indian Wars, then served as a justice of Augusta, signed the Association of 1769, and was a member of the House of Burgesses in 1772-1775.[2] William Preston followed the footsteps of his uncle James Patton in representing Augusta in the House of Burgesses from 1766 to 1769, then when his home "Smithfield" was included in the new Botetourt County, he represented it in 1770 and 1771. However, there is little evidence that he bothered to attend more than one session of the house. Preston, a well-educated man, had a lifelong interest in education as well as in the church. He was a brother-in-law to the Reverend John Brown, and helped organize the Denean Presbyterian congregation in Botetourt.[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Andrew Lewis," Dictionary of American Biography, XI, 206; Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: Appleton & Co., 1887), III, 701.

Most of these western leaders entered politics through their military activities, and in this they differed from the great majority of eastern leaders. Andrew Lewis, the greatest of the Indian fighters, had long served in the Augusta militia.

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[1] Griffith, The Virginia House of Burgesses, 1750-1774, pp. 112-113, suggests that Wilson may have been the Rev. John Brown's father-in-law; this was impossible, as Brown was married to the sister of William Preston.

[2] Ibid., pp. 113-114; "Ephraim McDowell," Dictionary of American Biography, XII, 27-28.

[3] Griffith, Virginia House of Burgesses, pp. 114-115, 128.

He surrendered with Washington at Fort Necessity, served with Braddock's army, and in 1758 was imprisoned in Quebec following his capture during General Forbes' campaign at Fort Duquesne.[1] After the war he served well in the delicate position of county lieutenant of Augusta but earned the enmity of some of the frontiersmen when he imprisoned a group of reckless whites who had murdered a party of peaceful Indians passing through the county in 1765.[2] In 1768 he served as one of Virginia's two representatives to draw up the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. His greatest distinction came in 1774 when he and his brother Charles led the troops which defeated the Shawnee Chief Cornstalk at the Battle of Point Pleasant. In March 1776 Continental Congress commissioned Lewis a Brigadier General, and later that year he led the troops which drove Governor Dunmore from Gwynn's Island.[3]

Similarly, William Preston achieved his reputation more as an Indian fighter than a legislator. During the French and Indian wars he captained a company of rangers, and in 1757 was appointed to make a treaty with the Shawnees and Delawares. He constructed a series of frontier forts and used his home as a garrison during the conflict.[1] Colonel William Fleming, who did not enter politics until 1776, had come to Virginia in 1755 from Scotland and immediately joined Washington's regiment, then later served under Adam Stephen. After the war he was active in the militia, and served as the colonel of a Botetourt regiment at Point Pleasant, where he was seriously wounded.[2]

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[1] Petition of Maj. Andrew Lewis for reimbursement for 16 months imprisonment in Quebec, Journal of the House of Burgesses, 24 November 1762.

[2] Ibid., 1764-1765, pp. xx, xxi, xxiii-xxlv, and 13 May 1765, p. 336.

[3] "Andrew Lewis," Dictionary of American Biography, XI, 206.

From their continual expansion first in the east and then throughout the piedmont and valley, the Presbyterians established themselves and their church firmly in Virginia. In the process of defending the frontier successfully against the Indians and their French allies, the Scots-Irish frontiersmen performed a valuable service for the colony. In opening new lands to the west and prospering on them this same group contributed in an important way to the economic expansion that helped make Virginia one of the largest, richest, and consequently, one of the most important colonies on the eve of the Revolution. And in the process of conducting their daily lives in such a way as to win respect among their neighbors, both Anglican and Presbyterian, they made a silent but significant contribution in the direction of religious freedom in Virginia. Their acceptance and performance of political functions further demonstrated the efficacy of a society as well integrated and diversified in its religious activities as it was in its military, economic, and political life. In the closing days of the colonial period the Presbyterians made one more significant contribution to Virginia life. Their work in education, which demonstrated their unbiased interest in improved facilities for all Virginians, not just their coreligionists, must have indicated to many in the colony the desirability of providing for Presbyterians equal treatment under the law in place of the rather peculiar toleration arrangement that had evolved over the years.

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[1] Griffith, Virginia House of Burgesses, pp. 114-115; Appleton's Cyclopedia, V, 114.

[2] Grigsby, History of the Virginia Federal Convention, pp. 40-50.

The concern of Presbyterians for good education has been a vastly important fact from the time of the Scottish Reformation.[1] In line with that tradition the Presbyterian church played an important role in education in Virginia. The focus of nearly all writing on this Presbyterian effort has been on Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall to the exclusion of Anglican and secular schools and of less successful Presbyterian efforts.[2] This cannot produce an accurate picture of the ideas and practices of education in Revolutionary Virginia, and makes it nearly impossible to assess the overall contribution of the Presbyterians in that important period.

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[1] John Knox in his First Book of Discipline in 1560 urged that every church have a schoolmaster and that all children be compelled to attend to learn grammar and Latin. David H. Fleming, The Reformation in Scotland: Causes, Characteristics, Consequences (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), pp. 263, 518-522.

[2] Some examples of books dealing solely with Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall are Foote's Sketches of Virginia; Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia, and Ernest Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, Volume One, 1607-1861 (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963).

In eighteenth-century Virginia a formal education could be obtained in many ways and, while the educational level may not have been high, there were few illiterates.[1] Apprenticeship indentures usually required the master to provide a basic education for his charge. Poor laws required the parish vestry to provide a rudimentary education for orphans and the children of paupers. Many plantations operated "old fields" schools for children in the neighborhood; ministers of the established church often supplemented their income by offering Latin, Greek, algebra, and geometry at "parsons' schools" at their glebes; wealthy planters provided tutors for their children or sent them to England, and small farmers in the west would contract with a schoolmaster to teach the children of eight or ten families for a period of a year.[2]

The Presbyterians, from the time of their settlement in Virginia, contributed to this diverse picture of educational opportunities by founding an elementary school within the bounds of most congregations.[1] There is no reason to hail these small schools as outstanding examples of culture on the frontier. For the Presbyterians they were a matter of normal procedure just as they were for most parishes of the established church to the east, and for the Germans in the lower valley.

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[1] Robert E. and B. Katherine Brown, Virginia 1705-1785: Democracy or Aristocracy? (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1964), pp. 271-275.

[2] William G. McCabe, Virginia Schools Before and After the Revolution (Charlottesville, Va.: Chronicle Steam Book and Job Office, 1890), pp. 9-11, 14; Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 449-450, 465, 477, 487-488, gives examples of contracts with schoolmasters made by English, Scots-Irish, and German farmers in the 1760's.

From among the larger number of Presbyterian schools, two are noteworthy for their longevity and possibly their quality. The first was the Latin grammar school conducted by the Reverend John Todd in Louisa County from 1752 until about the time of the Revolution. He had obtained a library and some scientific apparatus valued at £50 from a benefactor in London, and also employed a tutor, but he made no attempt to create an institution of this personal effort.[2]

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[1] Wilson, Tinkling Spring, pp. 49, 296. Each congregation occupied a specified geographic area which had been marked in a process known as "perambulation" and agreed upon by voice vote of the members of the group. By 1750 the Presbyterians had schoolmasters in at least four congregations: Robert Alexander at South Meeting House, William Wright at Tinkling Spring, a member of the Vance family at North Mountain, and an anonymous teacher in the Linville Creek area.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 47-48. This library was given by Todd to the Kentucky Academy and became the nucleus of the library of Transylvania University. The original donor was probably John Thornton, English philanthropist, member of the Clapham sect, and friend of education in the colonies, especially of Wheelock's work with the Indians. Leon Burr Richardson (ed.), An Indian Preacher in England: Being the Letters and Diaries Relating to the Mission of the Reverend Sampson Occom and the Reverend Nathaniel Whitaker to Collect Funds in England for the Benefit of Eleazar Wheelock's Indian Charity School, from which Grew Dartmouth College (Hanover, N.C.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1933), p. 108.

A more significant Presbyterian educational venture was the small classical school at Mount Pleasant in Augusta County, near a congregation of New Light Presbyterians. This school was begun about 1749 by Robert Alexander, an Ulster Scot graduate of Edinburgh University who moved to Augusta in 1743.[1] When John Brown, who graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1749, accepted a call from the congregations of Timber Ridge and New Providence in 1753, he assumed direction of Alexander's little school although Alexander probably continued to teach there. Indian attacks on the community undoubtedly interfered with the conduct of the school, but by 1763 it was firmly established under Brown's guidance, and he was calling it Augusta Academy. This was only one of many schools in the area, but it was probably the most important because Brown remained in charge of his school for two decades, giving it a stability the others lacked.[2]

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[1] The origins, founding date, and original location of this school remain obscure. Charles Kemper, "The Settlement of the Valley," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXX (July 1922), p. 179 believes it was founded in 1747. James T. Patton, "Letter on the Location of Robert Alexander's School, John Brown's Residence and Mount Pleasant," Washington and Lee University Historical Papers, no. 1. 1890 (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1890), pp. 125-129, claims the school was not built at Mount Pleasant until 1764. Most writers accept Foote's date and place, Sketches of Virginia, II, 58-60, 96-97.

[2] Brown probably studied theology with Samuel Blair, who had taught Samuel Davies, for the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia has a Memorandum Book by Brown containing copious notes of Blair's sermons. Davies preached Brown's ordination sermon in October 1753. Richard Webster, A History of the Presbyterian Church in America from Its Origin until the Year 1760 with

As political developments carried the colonists farther from the mother country with every passing year, Virginia experienced what in modern parlance would be termed an educational explosion, and in which we can clearly recognize aspects of what was to be known popularly a few years later as "republican education." Prior to 1770 it is unusual to find an article or advertisement about schools or teachers in the Virginia Gazette, but after that date, numerous issues of the paper carried notices of new schools opened or of planters or parishes seeking teachers.[1]

Presbyterians figure prominently in the work of establishing these new schools. Between 1770 and 1780 newspaper and other contemporary accounts tell us of at least seventeen schools founded, usually on some variation of the classical academy or Latin grammar school. Most of them provided boarding facilities and enrolled from ten to fifty students. They were located in the towns of Norfolk, Fredericksburg, and Williamsburg,

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Biographical Sketches of its Early Ministers (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1857), pp. 656-657. Alexander remained in the Timber Ridge area until 1786, and there is some evidence that Brown taught infrequently, for in 1773 he wrote his brother-in-law, "I am very busily employed in my old-age more than I have been since I was a Boy; overseeing the school & sometimes hearing Classes. . . ." John Brown to William Preston, Preston Papers, Draper Collection, 2QQ141, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

[1] See for example, (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 1 March 1770, 17 October 1771, 27 February 1772, 28 January 1773, 22 April 1773, 3 March 1774; (Dixon) 9 September 1775, 2 October 1775, 26 January 1777.

and the counties of Caroline, Culpeper, Cumberland, Fauquier, Frederick, Hanover, Lunenburg, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Rockbridge, and Southampton. Three of these schools were operated by parsons of the established church.[1] The teachers of eight others are identified by name. Of the remaining schools, four were established by Presbyterian ministers: those of Hezekiah Balch in Fauquier County, Daniel McCalla in Hanover, William Graham in Rockbridge, and Samuel Stanhope Smith in Prince Edward. Of these seventeen known schools only a few existed more than a few years, and all of the survivors were Presbyterian institutions. McCalla's Washington-Henry Academy in Hanover lasted until the latter nineteenth century when it was absorbed by the local school system.[2] Hampden-Sydney in Prince Edward, and Liberty Hall (now Washington and Lee) are thriving collegiate institutions today.

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[1] "Dominie" John Cameron's classical school in Lunenburg, Christopher McRae's Littleton Parish School in Cumberland County (Powhatan), and the Rev. Walker Maury's school in Orange County, later moved to Williamsburg. McCabe, Virginia Schools Before and After the Revolution, pp. 11-12n, 30-31. William Hill, who later became a Presbyterian minister, studied at McRae's for three years during the Revolution, during which time he "followed loose & vicious companions into all the common vices practiced by profligate youths." MSS of Rev. Wm. Hill, D.D., Union Theological Seminary, Richmond. The other schools included Charles MacIver's at Col. Nathaniel Dandridge's in Hanover (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette, 15 October 1772 and John Bruce's "publick school" in Norfolk, ibid., 11 July 1771. See also R. E. and B. K. Brown, Virginia 1705-1786, pp. 274-276.

[2] A. J. Morrison, The Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, 1776-1860: Study of Secondary Schools in Relation to the State Literary Fund (Richmond: Davis Botton, 1917), pp. 108-109.

Before examining these successful schools, let us look at a Presbyterian venture that failed, because as the first effort by a Presbyterian to found a large boarding school to appeal to a cross-section of Virginians rather than the children of a local congregation, this ill-fated effort may have given some impetus to the founding of those Presbyterian schools which succeeded, as well as to the lively discussion of higher education which continued throughout the 1770's and 1780's in Virginia.

About 1765 there appeared in New Kent County, an area in which dissenters had been strong since the time of Samuel Davies, an ambitious friend of colonial education, Charles Jeffrey Smith. A native of Long Island and graduate of Yale in 1757, Smith had served as master in Eleazar Wheelock's Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut prior to his ordination in 1763. Ill health prevented Smith's fond dream of working with the Indians as a missionary from the Society in Scotland for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, so he turned to work in Virginia where he had inherited property.[1] In October 1765 he preached and published a sermon in Williamsburg, and from 1766 to 1769 Smith devoted much of his time to the Presbyterians in Davies' former territory, although he did not affiliate with Hanover Presbytery.[1] In February 1769 Smith announced his intention to settle on an estate he owned at Providence Forge near the Chickahominy River, and he opened a subscription to erect an imposing Presbyterian church there, seventy by forty feet, with galleries and a steeple.[2]

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[1] Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History, Vol. II, May 1745-May 1763 (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1896), p. 495; Richardson, An Indian Preacher In England, p. 20n. The Scottish Society which sponsored Wheelock's work was the same which had aided Samuel Davies' missionary program to the Cherokee Indians in 1757. An Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (n.p. 1774), pp. 16-17, Presbyterian Historical Society.

In March 1770 Smith published the most extensive plan for the expansion of education in Virginia since the founding of the College of William and Mary eighty years earlier. On his land in New Kent he proposed to erect a schoolbuilding to house fifty to one hundred students and two tutors, who could live in the healthy, moral atmosphere away from such evils as horse racing, card-playing, and cockfighting familiar in Williamsburg and its college. There they could worship twice daily at a service planned to please Anglican parents as well as Presbyterian.[1]

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[1] C. J. Smith to Wheelock, 6 October 1765, in Richardson, An Indian Preacher in England, p. 60; Charles Jeffrey Smith, A.M., The Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, considered in a Discourse delivered at Williamsburg in Virginia with a dedication to the Episcopal Church in that city, containing an apology for Presbyterians (Williamsburg, Va., 1766).

[2] Notice in (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 16 February 1769, p. 2. This would have been the largest Presbyterian meeting house in the colony, and if constructed of brick would compare favorably with the handsome parish churches in the Tidewater. By comparison, Tinkling Spring, a typical Valley meeting house, was a log structure twenty-four by fifty feet, with a dirt floor, and cost a total of £22/16 in 1746. Wilson, Tinkling Spring, pp. 88-91.

Smith proposed that his academy consist of two branches: the "English education Course" for younger boys consisting of reading, writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping, navigation, surveying, and geography; and the "languages, arts, and sciences" or classical course, consisting of Latin, Greek, logic, rhetoric, natural and moral philosophy, and astronomy. He hoped to supplement these courses with studies in jurisprudence, the history of Britain and Virginia, and husbandry and agriculture. Although Smith stated that the art of speaking would be cultivated in order to "prepare young men for pulpit, senate, bar," it is also obvious from his inclusion of coursework in scientific agriculture that he had in mind the needs of the majority of young Virginians who would spend their lives farming rather than preaching, orating, and arguing in court.[2]

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[1] The faculty of William and Mary had made efforts to prevent the students from keeping racehorses and fighting cocks and from playing billiards, but had not been wholly successful. Excerpts from the proceedings of the faculty, 14 September 1752, History of the College of William and Mary from Its Foundation 1660 to 1874 (Richmond: J. W. Randolph & English, 1874), p. 47. One planter, Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, refused to send his son there because of the drinking and card playing of the professors. Hunter D. Farish (ed.), Journal & Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion (Williamsburg, Va.: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1943), pp. 86-87.

[2] Charles Jeffrey Smith to the Public, (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 1 March 1770, p. 1. R. E. and B. K. Brown, Virginia 1705-1781, pp. 280-281, maintain that his plan (which they say was "probably" by Smith) was an early example of the division

The Presbyterians had established no formal theological education in Virginia and Smith proposed to arrange lectures in divinity by himself and other neighboring clergymen, perhaps Anglican as well as Presbyterian, for he proclaimed that he had as many Episcopal divines as Presbyterians in his library. In addition to his library of several hundred "well-chosen volumes in divinity, law, physics, history, etc.," as well as some "books of amusement" for the younger students in the English course, Smith owned such basic physical apparatus as a globe, barometer, air pump, maps, surveying instruments, and an electrical machine.[1]

Smith was not at all modest about his personal fortune, and implied that he could operate the entire school out of his own pocket, making it the cheapest in the colony. Because this might draw students from other schools whose masters were not as wealthy, Smith proposed to charge fees similar to other schools and apply profits first to scholarships for poor children, then to add an Indian academy so dear to his original dream.[2]

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between vocational and liberal arts education. A close study of the proposal indicates that the English course was intended for the younger students, and the languages, arts, and sciences for the older ones.

[1] Smith to the Public, (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 1 March 1770. The only Presbyterian ministers near enough to lecture at Smith's schol were James Waddel in Lancaster County and John Todd in Louisa.

[2] "The Rev. Mr. Smith's Plan of an academy continued," (Rind) Virginia Gazette supplement, 15 March 1770, p. 1. Although the discussion was to be continued after this issue, nothing further appeared.

This concept of a comprehensive school was certainly not novel in Virginia, for William and Mary, with its Indian school, grammar school, collegiate studies and divinity course offered a well-established comprehensive approach to education. It is possible that Smith conceived of his school as a dissenter's alternative to the institution at Williamsburg. There is also reason to believe that his inspiration had an additional source. Smith greatly admired Wheelock's work and had been intimately involved with him in 1763 in plans for a coeducational Indian school to provide grammar schooling, manual training in crafts and husbandry, and a college to educate missionaries, interpreters, and schoolmasters. Although this differs from the school Wheelock developed into Dartmouth College, we see many of its parts in Smith's proposals to the Virginians in 1770.[1]

We shall never know what chance of success Smith's academy would have had for the following notice appeared in the Virginia Gazette in September.

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[1] Wheelock's plan was related to the settlement of Connecticut people along the Susquehanna River near the Indians, and the donation of some of those lands to the school. In September 1762 and January 1763 Wheelock had sought unsuccessfully Sir William Johnson's support of his plan. After Johnson's rejection, Wheelock sent Smith in April 1763 with a letter to Sir Jeffrey Amherst, then the Governor General, seeking his assistance. Amherst soon returned to England and was of no help either. Wheelock to Gen. Jeffrey Amherst, April 1763, in Baxter Perry Smith, The History of Dartmouth College (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, and Co., 1878), pp. 23-25, 29-30.

> Albany, August 17, 1770. We hear from Setaukett, on Long Island, that on Friday the 10th instant, as the Rev. Charles Jeffery Smith was out a gunning his gun went off accidentally, while he was charging her, which immediately killed him.[1]

Some measure of the esteem with which this young man was held by many Virginians can be inferred from the very long account which Rind printed on the first two pages of his edition of October 1770.[2] Smith's executors auctioned his estate of 3,000 acres, several houses, four mills, a forge, two Negroes, and his "large and valuable collection of books," the last vestige of an inspired attempt to extend educational opportunities in Virginia.[3]

What effect Smith's unofficial Presbyterian school plan may have had on the ministers of Hanover Presbytery is hard to gauge. They may have reacted negatively to it by gradually developing plans for a school of their own. There is no evidence that the presbytery had given any consideration to sponsoring a school in Virginia prior to 1771, a year after Smith died. In fact, in 1769, at the request of the Synod, several Virginia ministers were appointed to travel throughout the colony collecting funds for the College of New Jersey.[1] In 1771 the Synod asked Hanover Presbytery for money for the Academy of Newark, but by then the presbytery was considering a school of its own, and recommended that its ministers come to the spring meeting of 1772 with plans for establishing a school.[2] Discussion of the school was repeatedly postponed however, until 1774. At that time, moreover, the presbytery was primarily concerned with the restrictive provisions of the toleration bill proposed by the General Assembly and limited its educational concerns to deciding that "the publick Seminary for the liberal Education of Youth" would be located in Staunton in Augusta County.[3] This decision may indicate that the greatest support for a Presbyterian school came from the residents of the valley and was probably not related to Charles Jeffrey Smith's proposals at all.

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[1] (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette, 6 September 1770, p. 2. Smith was hunting on an estate he owned at Brookhaven, Suffolk County, Long Island.

[2] (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 1 November 1770.

[3] Sale Notice for 18 March 1771 at Providence Forge, (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette, 24 January 1771, p. 3.

After dawdling over vague plans for a school for over three years, suddenly in October 1774 at a meeting in Charlotte County, the presbytery undertook to sponsor not one, but two schools in the colony, one in Augusta and the other on the

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 11 October 1769. John Craig and John Brown each spent six weeks travelling in the Valley and western Virginia to collect funds. James Waddel was unable to cover the Southside and Tidewater congregations, but sent £8 from his own church. Ibid., 25 April 1770.

[2] Ibid., 9 October 1771, 5 April, 14 October 1772, 2 June 1773.

[3] Ibid., April 1774.

"south side of the Blue Ridge" in either Prince Edward or Cumberland County. The impetus for the undertaking seems to have been provided by an outsider, Samuel Stanhope Smith, who indicated to the presbytery "that if properly encouraged, he may be enduced to take the charge of such a Seminary" in the Prince Edward area, and so the presbytery agreed to "establish and Patronise" the school, pending local financial support.[1]

In the summer of 1774 Samuel Smith, like young Samuel Davies some twenty-seven years earlier, had come to Virginia as a missionary from New Castle Presbytery with strong New Light credentials.[2] The eldest of three sons, Samuel had been so well prepared in classics at his father's school in Pequea that he entered the junior class at the College of New Jersey at the age of sixteen, and graduated first in his class in 1769, thoroughly imbued with Witherspoon's common sense philosophy. He had assisted his father at Pequea one year, and in his spare time read Pope, Swift, Addison, and Locke, then returned to

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 12-14 October 1774.

[2] His father, Robert Smith, had come from Londonderry to Head of Brandywine as a boy in 1730, and at the age of fifteen was converted by the great evangelist, George Whitefield, during his first American journey. Robert Smith studied with Davies' beloved mentor, Samuel Blair, was licensed in 1749 and served as a missionary in Virginia. He married Blair's daughter and settled in Pequea, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. There he conducted an extraordinary classical school where only Latin was spoken. Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church in America, pp. 612-613.

Princeton to teach classics and read theology until he was licensed in 1773.[1]

The sophistication, wit, and charm which had made the handsome young man an object of satire to one of his pupils[2] were probably the attributes which endeared him to Virginians generally, Anglicans as well as dissenters. As he visited the various congregations in the Valley and the Southside in the summer of 1774, Smith must have heard much talk about the need for schools. He knew that his own experience in teaching and his connections with outstanding educators in the middle colonies placed him in a unique position to improve the educational opportunities for these Virginia Presbyterians, so he cast his lot with them. When John Brown sought his advice on a new teacher for his school, Smith recommended a friend from college, William Graham.[3]

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[1] Samuel Holt Monk, "Samuel Stanhope Smith: Friend of Rational Liberty," in Willard Thorp (ed.), The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 89-90.

[2] In 1772 an undergraduate wrote a poem, "The Belle of Princeton," which included the lines

> Tutor Smith, so wond'rous civil,
> Compound odd of Saint and Devil. . . .
> Proud of his learning and his parts
> The case exact of all upstarts--
> Proud of his beauty too; I swear
> He is all lovely and all fair;

Monk, "Samuel Stanhope Smith," p. 91.

[3] Presbytery records call Graham "a Gentleman properly recommended to this p^{by}," Minutes of Hanover Presbytery, 13 October 1774. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 441, states that the recommendation was from Smith, as does the Rev. Henry

Graham was born in 1746 in Paxton Township, Pennsylvania, where his pastor and early teacher was John Roan who had upset Tidewater Virginians with his evangelistic preaching in the early years of the Great Awakening. Graham worked his way through the College of New Jersey by teaching in its preparatory school, then returned to Paxton to study theology with Roan until the offer came to teach in Virginia.[1]

Once the presbytery had determined to sponsor two schools, they set in motion the elaborate process of organizing an institution in much the same way as their predecessors at the various new colonial colleges. The most immediate need was money. Because the school in Augusta County already existed under John Brown's sponsorship, the presbytery recommended to their congregations to contribute to a fund to provide a library and scientific apparatus for that seminary, and appointed the ministers in the Valley to collect from the congregations in the area which the school would most immediately benefit.[2]

Ruffner, "Early History of Washington College, now Washington and Lee University," Washington and Lee Historical Papers, No. 1, 1890, pp. 16-18.

[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 338-341.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 13 October 1774. John Brown to collect from the Pastures, Providence, and North Mountain congregations in Augusta; David Rice in Botetourt and South Side of James River; William Irwin at Tinkling Spring, Stone Meeting House and Brown's settlement in Augusta; Caleb Wallace in Forks of James; Charles Cummings in Fincastle County, and Samuel Smith at his pleasure.

The presbytery had not selected a site for the school "south of the Blue Ridge," but recommended the fund-raising task particularly to Cumberland, Prince Edward, and Briery congregations.[1] In their fund campaign these Southside congregations were far from inventive. The successful funding of the newer American colleges had been based directly on the experience of English schools and charities since the seventeenth century. Both English and American schools had found the subscription list pledge an especially lucrative method, for it permitted the donor to advertise his generosity in a refined manner, allowed payment in the future, a fact particularly important for Virginia's agricultural economy, and it enabled a large group of middle income individuals to participate rather than relying on a few very wealthy donors.[2] The members of these congregations were already familiar with subscriptions, for in the preceding decade both Cumberland and Briery had arranged subscriptions to purchase several slaves whose labor would provide an income to support a minister and maintain the property--an ugly sort of living endowment.[3] These congregations employed subscription solicitation for a school with such success that in less than three months they had so many signatures that the presbytery moderator appointed a presbytery pro re nata to arrange academy affairs.[1]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 14 October 1774.

[2] Beverly McAnear, "The Raising of Funds by the Colonial Colleges," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVIII (March 1952), p. 594; David Owen, English Philanthropy, 1660-1960 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 25, 71-72.

[3] Session Book of Briery Church, Vol. I, pp. 8-12; Session Book of Cumberland Congregation, pp. 2-5, Virginia State Library.

Present at this meeting at Captain Nathaniel Venable's plantation, "Slate Hill" in Prince Edward on 1 February 1775 were the five Presbyterian ministers in the area: Richard Sankey of the Buffalo congregation in Charlotte County; David Rice of the Bedford group; Samuel Leake of Rich Cove and North Garden in Albemarle, and William Irwin of Rockfish and Mountain Plains in Amherst County.[2]

When these five learned that ₤1300 had been subscribed, they immediately appropriated ₤400 for the purchase of books and mathematical apparatus. They then nominated a group of "visitors and managers" to collect or borrow this sum and send it to Philadelphia by 1 May 1775. Samuel Stanhope Smith, who was not present, would purchase the equipment in Philadelphia rather than ordering it from England, for the presbytery wished to abide by the non-importation agreement.[3]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 1 February 1775.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 81, 87-89; Webster, History of the Presbyterian Church, p. 612.

[3] To assure the wisest outlay of the funds, the presbytery appointed a committee of distinguished Presbyterians to advise young Smith. They were Smith's father, then moderator of the Synod; the Rev. Robert Davidson of Philadelphia Second Presbytery; the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers of New York, and two laymen, John Bayard, a prominent Philadelphia merchant and leader

The presbytery met the following day to select a tract of land, appoint a building committee, name a board of trustees, name the school, fix the fees, and arrange to hire an assistant to Smith whom they named rector.[1] Few institutions can claim such a well-organized beginning. In contrast to the northern colleges whose building lot was "invariably provided by a public or semi-public organization in order to attract the college to its town,"[2] the lot selected was the gift of an individual citizen. The donor was Peter Johnston, a prominent resident of Prince Edward who had served many years as a justice of the peace, and had been a burgess since 1769, and since 1766 had served as vestryman and sometime warden of the established church.[3] Johnston and several other area planters comprised a

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of the non-importation movement, and Samuel Broom, a New York merchant. Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 1 February 1775; Varnum L. Collins, General Catalogue of Princeton University, 1746-1906 (Princeton, N.J.: Published by the University, 1908), p. 17.

[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 1-3 February 1776.

[2] Beverly McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies, 1745-1775," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXV, (June 1949), p. 28.

[3] Peter Johnston had emigrated from Scotland, which may explain his sympathy for the Presbyterian school in spite of his own strong connections with the established church. M. M. Quaife (ed.), Publications of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Calendar Series, Vol. I: The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts (Madison, Wisc.: Published by the Society, 1915), p. 292; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 54-57, 59, 62. Johnston conveyed the tract of land to the trustees on 20 April 1775 for the sum of 5 shillings. Prince Edward County Deed Book, V, pp. 325-328. Microfilm at Virginia State Library; Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 2 and 3 February, 1775.

committee to draw plans for an academy building, a rector's residence and outbuildings, and to let contracts for these to the lowest bidder.[1]

In contrast to the highly successful fund drive the Presbyterians conducted for the school in Prince Edward, the drive which the presbytery had set on foot in October 1774 for the school in the Valley was a near disaster. John Brown wrote of the results to his brother-in-law William Preston,

> M^{r} Irvine who was ordered to Tinkling-spring, Augusta & Brown's Congregations answered that he did not get a farthing subscribed, the reason they gave was that the Place was not fixed or I rather think because it was not certain it wou'd be in Staunton. . . . The bounds assigned me viz Cooks Creek, Mossy Creek, Pastures & N. mountain Subscribed very cheerfully tho in a very low Figure. . . .[2]

The other ministers met with a similar lack of enthusiasm among the people, and when the presbytery met in April 1775 at Timber Ridge to inspect Brown's school and make plans for the academy, the members decided they were unable to take action with so little financial backing. Accordingly, the presbytery appointed twenty-three laymen in Botetourt, Augusta, and Fincastle Counties to canvass their areas for subscriptions and emphasize that the school was to be non-sectarian.[3] All of the appointees seem to have been Scots-Irish, and most were probably Presbyterian. The inclusion of several military heroes from the Indian Wars was intended obviously to add prestige to a badly lagging campaign. In this group a strong connection between Brown's school and the new academy seems to exist, for six of them had been students there, as had relatives of at least two others.[1] Brown himself seems considerably less than enthusiastic about the seminary plans, for in informing Preston of his appointment as a canvasser he wrote, "Were I to give you my sentiment, upon the whole I fear the scheme is too contracted & not upon as Catholic a plan as to answer the best purposes."[2]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 2 February 1775.

[2] John Brown to William Preston at "Smithfields," Fincastle County, 5 May 1775. Preston Papers, Draper Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 4QQ15.

[3] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 14 April 1775.

Although the solicitors were meeting with some success in garnering funds during the summer, Brown remained skeptical, for he wrote Preston at the end of the summer

> I think that the Times are not favourable to the design of the semenary nor am I apprehensive that it will answer the end expected for I think the Expectation is too high for the Plan that is laid. A private school & the College of New Jersey will polish a young Man & fit him for usefullness better than any semenary that we can expect in Virginia.[3]

At its October meeting the presbytery appointed eight of the canvassers to collect subscriptions and authorized William Graham to spend £150 on books and apparatus. This is far less than the £400, or one-third of their total subscription which Prince Edward Academy appropriated for a library and laboratory, and may indicate that less than ₤500 had been subscribed altogether for Augusta Academy. The presbytery realized the inadequacy of this sum and urged the fund raisers to continue seeking subscriptions. However, the presbytery was sufficiently optimistic about the future of the little school to choose an assistant for Graham, one John Montgomery, a native of Augusta who had just graduated from the College of New Jersey.[1]

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[1] Thomas C. Wilson, Jr. (ed.), Washington and Lee University Alumni Directory, 1749-1949 (Lexington, Va.: Published by Washington and Lee Alumni, 1949), passim, esp. p. 315.

[2] Brown to Preston, 5 May 1775.

[3] Brown to Preston, 24 August 1775, Draper Collection, 4QQ31.

It was not until May 1776 that the supporters of Augusta Academy made plans for the physical plant and appointed a board of trustees. Graham reported that he had purchased ₤160 worth of books and apparatus and that the fund raisers had collected an additional ₤125. Satisfied that the school was on sound footing, the presbytery confirmed Graham and Montgomery in their positions. The presbytery chose Timber Ridge as the site of the school because Graham had become minister there and two members of the congregation each offered forty adjacent acres near the church for the school. Other members of the congregation offered to erect a log house twenty-eight by twenty-four feet, and a story and a half high,[2] in addition to their regular subscriptions, and to provide a twenty-year supply of free firewood. Finally, the presbytery appointed a group of twenty-four trustees to conduct school business on behalf of the presbytery.[1]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 26, 27 October 1775; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 107.

[2] This was indeed a small academy. The Boston Latin School erected its second schoolhouse in 1704, two stories tall, 40 x 25 feet, and housing 100 boys. Samuel Eliot Morison, The Puritan Proanoas (New York: New York University Press, 1936), p. 101.

The presbytery appointed a committee of several trustees who had already taken an active role in subscription collection to survey the land, secure the title, and draw plans for the buildings in the same fashion employed by the Prince Edward supporters the previous summer.[2] This executive committee met on 13 May 1776 as directed by the presbytery, and changed the name of the school from Augusta Academy to Liberty Hall Academy. The practical reason for the change was that Timber Ridge lay in that part of Augusta which was to be made into a new county (Rockbridge), and possibly because the trustees hoped to give the school a wider appeal if it did not have a regional name.[3] The political spirit of the new name hardly can be overlooked, chosen as it was just two days before the unanimous vote of the Virginia Convention to instruct its delegates to Continental Congress to vote for independence.

In the individuals chosen as trustees for the new academies, we have some excellent examples of the successful integration in and contribution to Virginia life by Presbyterians. Trustees at Prince Edward included Nathaniel and James Venable, whose mother was a Quaker and whose grandfather had been a Huguenot refugee. James may have become a Presbyterian in 1757 when he married the daughter of Joseph Morton, one of Samuel Davies' original converts in the Southside, and he served for many years as an elder of Briery congregation.[1] Nathaniel, who was far more active in politics than his brother, may not have joined the Presbyterians until shortly before the Revolution, but he played a very active role in the establishment of the academy. Two other Presbyterian trustees, John Morton and Francis Watkins, were also active in local politics.[2] In addition to these dissenters, membership of the Prince Edward Board included several distinguished churchmen whose presence on the board may be considered an example of their own broad-minded views on the contributions dissenters could make to Virginia life. The best-known figure on the board was probably Colonel Paul Carrington, attorney, Burgess from Charlotte County, member of the Committee of Safety and the Virginia Conventions and never a Presbyterian.[3] His brother-in-law Colonel

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 3, 4, 6 May 1776.

[2] Ibid.

[3] William Henry Ruffner's notes to Henry Ruffner, "Early History of Washington College. . . ," pp. 23-24. The members of the committee were William Graham, Alexander Stewart, John Houston, Samuel Lyle, Charles Campbell, and William McKee.

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[1] Rouse, Reads and their Relatives, pp. 130-132, 82-83, 287-288; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 62, 145, 761, 678-686; Briery Session Book, Vol. I, Virginia State Library.

[2] Supra, pp. 240-241.

[3] J. Cullen Carrington, Charlotte County, Virginia: Historical, Statistical, and Present Attractions (Richmond: Hermitage Press, 1907), p. 15.

Thomas Read of Charlotte had served as vestryman, county clerk, Burgess, and sheriff, and also sat on the Committee of Safety and in the Conventions. Although not a Presbyterian, he had subscribed to the fund for Briery congregation in 1766.[1] Colonel John Nash, Jr., had served as a justice of Prince Edward Court since 1754, was a vestryman of St. Patrick's Parish, and served on the Committee of Safety and sat in the Conventions.[2] And, of course, Peter Johnston, the donor of the land for the school, who as a justice, former Burgess, and vestryman was one of Prince Edward's most prominent citizens.[3]

In addition to these distinguished laymen, both Presbyterian and Anglican, the board of the academy included four Presbyterian ministers: Richard Sankey of Buffalo congregation; John Todd who had maintained his congregation in Louisa for over twenty years; Samuel Leake, pastor in Albemarle since 1770, and Caleb Wallace, pastor of Cub Creek and Little Falling River congregation in his native Charlotte County since 1774.[4]

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[1] Rouse, Reads and their Relatives, pp. 15, 19-20, 541-544; Briery Session Book, Vol. I, p. 10.

[2] Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 108-109; Rouse, Reads and their Relatives, pp. 82-83, 287-288.

[3] Supra, p. 267.

[4] Wallace graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1770. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 105; William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachal, (eds.), The Papers of James Madison, Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 60.

In November 1775, shortly before Prince Edward Academy was scheduled to open, the presbytery expanded the board of trustees to include the Reverend David Rice, John Tabb, William Cabell, Patrick Henry, and a future president of the United States, James Madison. As a Presbyterian minister, Rice was a natural inclusion. The others may have been selected to help promote the interests of the school beyond the immediate area, for each was prominent in a different section of the colony. Tabb, of Amelia County, does not seem to have accepted his appointment. Cabell, a member of the Amherst County Committee of Safety, had sat in the House of Burgesses at nearly every session since 1757. If not a Presbyterian himself, he was very sympathetic to their position, for it was at his home that the presbytery had met in 1774 to draw its remonstrance against the proposed bill of toleration.[1] He had been an early friend of the academy, subscribing £12 when one of the trustees approached him at the March 1775 Convention.[2]

James Madison may have been added at the suggestion of Samuel Stanhope Smith, who was a tutor at Princeton while

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[1] J. B. Hennemann, "Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, VI (October 1898), p. 175; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 320-321. Cabell married the sister of Paul Carrington.

[2] William Cabell Diary, 24 March 1775, 27 October 1775, 6 April 1776. Microfilm copy of these diaries in the Manuscripts Division of the University of Virginia Library. The original diaries have been placed in custody of the Virginia Historical Society by Mrs. Arthur A. Dugdale.

Madison was a student, and as a personal friend, recognized Madison as a rising political figure with an understanding for the position of the dissenters and an abhorrence of religious persecution.[1] Patrick Henry, who had attended Davies' congregation as a youth and married a Presbyterian, had achieved considerable popularity among dissenters for his opposition to the Two Penny Acts.[2]

The board of trustees of Liberty Hall, like that of Prince Edward, included many well known local figures, but unlike the Southside trustees, few of those at Liberty Hall were members of the established church or prominent political figures in the colony. From the original fund raising committee came four of the leading citizens of the Valley: William Christian, William Fleming, Andrew Lewis, and William Preston. Lewis in 1736 and Preston in 1746 had come to the Valley from Ireland; Christian was born in the Valley, and Fleming, a medical graduate of Edinburgh University and former Royal Navy surgeon, settled there in 1755 and later married Christian's sister.[3] Preston, deputy surveyor for Augusta County since 1752, was an agent of the Loyal Company, and brother-in-law of the Reverend John Brown.[1] As young men all four tasted fighting in the French and Indian Wars, and throughout their lives each served in a variety of governmental posts. Christian, an attorney, was justice of the peace and militia captain in Augusta, and in 1772 was named first high sheriff of Fincastle County.[2] Preston had served as justice, county lieutenant, and Burgess, as had Fleming.[3] Andrew Lewis' claim to fame came from his defeat of the Shawnee chief Cornstalk at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774.[4]

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[1] Smith visited with Madison at his home in Orange County at least twice in 1775, for he carried letters between Madison and their mutual friend William Bradford in Philadelphia en route to, and returning from his wedding to Witherspoon's daughter that summer. Hutchinson and Rachal, Papers of James Madison, I, 148-151, 154, 157-158.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 8 November 1775; Hennemann, "Trustees of Hampden-Sydney," p. 175.

[3] Thomas P. Abernathy, Western Lands and the American Revolution (New York: Russell & Russell, 1959), pp. 4, 8, 80; Hart, The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, pp. 55, 72.

Other trustees selected from the fund raising group included Major Samuel McDowell, a Presbyterian-bred lawyer who became an Anglican vestryman, served in the House of Burgesses in 1774 and in the Virginia Convention of 1776. Captain George Moffett, McDowell's brother-in-law, served as an Augusta justice, and though a pious Presbyterian elder, was also a vestryman.[5]

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[1] Abernethy, Western Lands, pp. 63-65, 132-133, 222; John R. Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1944), pp. 48, 58-59, 270-275.

[2] Abernethy, Western Lands, p. 80; Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 45, 85, 156.

[3] Abernethy, Western Lands, p. 153;"William Fleming," Dictionary of American Biography, VI, 461.

[4] "Andrew Lewis," National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White & Co., 1898), I, 75-76.

[5] Hugh Blair Grigsby, "Founders of Washington College," Washington and Lee Historical Papers, No. 1, 1890 (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1890), pp. 63-67, 90-91; Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 85, 107, 160, 170, 188; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 122.

Sampson Mathews and William McPheeters were among the trustees.[1] Charles Campbell, Samuel Lyle, and Thomas Stewart were three trustees who seem to have restricted their activities to church work rather than politics.[2] Captain William McKee was active in the Augusta militia, while Colonel John Bowyer, a former schoolteacher, was a leading citizen of Botetourt County which he represented in the Virginia Conventions.[3]

Six men who had not been associated with the earlier funds campaign were included in the appointment of trustees in May 1776. John Houston, an original elder of New Providence, was an industrious, pious man. Captain Alexander Stewart had donated land for the school. Thomas Lewis, elder brother of Andrew, had been well-educated in Ireland, served as first surveyor of Augusta, married a staunch Anglican, and served as a burgess. Joining him as a trustee was his nephew John Lewis of Warn Springs. The two remaining appointees were John Gratton, merchant in Staunton and a large landholder who was an elder in Augusta Stone church as well as a vestryman. William

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[1] Supra, p. 242.

[2] Grigsby, "Founders of Washington College," pp. 71-73, 84-85, 103-104; Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 148.

[3] Grigsby, "Founders of Washington College," pp. 68-73, 87-89; Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 108-150.

Ward, a former deputy sheriff of Augusta, made his only mark on history when he was arrested for treason in 1781.[1]

The clerical trustees in addition to Graham were Charles Cummings, former tutor in Lancaster County, who had joined Waddel's congregation, probably studied theology with him, and had served an Augusta congregation before moving to the frontier in Fincastle County.[2] Little is known of William Irwin, pastor of Rockfish and Mountain Plains in Amherst since 1772, save that "he never put himself forward or affected to take the lead, in matters of Church or State."[3] John Brown, who had supervised the school for so many years, and James Waddel, who had taught at John Todd's school in Louisa as well as that of Robert Smith in Pequea, Pennsylvania, were good choices for trustees.[4]

On the whole, the selection of trustees for Liberty Hall does not seem as successful as that for Prince Edward Academy. Of the four wealthiest and most prestigious members, we have no indication that Lewis, Christian, or Fleming contributed much time or money toward the effort of establishing the school, although the inclusion of their names may have been valuable in gaining respect for the institution among the general public. We know from Brown's correspondence with Preston that the latter kept abreast of school developments, but because Brown himself had such low expectations for any Presbyterian seminary in Virginia, and because Preston was also engaged in starting a grammar school at Round Oak in Fincastle County, his enthusiasm for Liberty Hall may have been somewhat limited too.[1]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 36; Grigsby, "Founders of Washington College," pp. 74-80; Chalkley, Chronicles, I, 160, 166, 170, 177, 119, 221, 494.

[2] John Brown wrote of Cummings, who was a member of the Fincastle County Committee of Safety, "I question Mr. Cumming's right to be one of the Committee & a Gospel Minister at the same time. Who made him a Ruler & judge in civil affairs?" Brown to Preston, 24 August 1775, Preston Papers, Draper Collection, 4QQ31.

[3] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 27 October 1775; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 89.

[4] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 349-351, 375-376.

The business of the school was conducted by a committee consisting of Graham, Alexander Stewart, Campbell, Lyle, Houston, and McKee, all devoted Presbyterians, but none of them wealthy or politically prominent. The fact that Liberty Hall operated on a more modest scale than the Prince Edward school during most of the Revolutionary period may be due in part to the fact that it did not have such vigorous leadership among the trustees. While it is true that James Madison and Patrick Henry, to our hindsight the most important trustees at Prince Edward, took no part in board meetings, the men who were most active in pursuing the operation of the school included Read, Nash, the Venable brothers, and Johnston, all of whom were wealthy as well as respected, powerful local figures.

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[1] Brown to Preston, 24 August 1775, Preston Papers, Draper Collection, 4QQ31.

In spite of having fewer distinguished active trustees and a smaller initial subscription to found their school, the Liberty Hall trustees had greater fruit to show for their labors on opening day. On 1 January 1777 on the eighty acres near Timber Ridge meeting house stood a one and one-half story log house, fitted out with wooden benches and desks, and containing the small library and scientific apparatus Graham had selected for £350. The trustees had secured all this for the youth of the Valley with an expenditure of less than £700.[1]

The Hampden-Sydney trustees had not produced a complete academy for the students to enter on opening day, 1 January 1776. The library and laboratory which Smith had purchased for £360 were ready, but contracts for the rector's residence and academy building, amounting to £694 had not been let until November 1775,[2] so it is hardly surprising that the buildings were not ready two months later. More alarming however, is the fact that by May 1776 the walls were only three feet high, and the students, who had no place to study, with the permission of the contractor, hammered together eight or ten tiny huts out of shingles intended for the academy roof.[1]

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[1] Although the presbytery instructed Graham to spend £150 on books and apparatus (27 October 1775), he reported to the trustees in May 1776 that he had spent £163, and that the funds committee had collected £125 for him. The trustees appointed in May 1776 raised an additional £230, of which Graham spent £197 on the library and laboratory, and returned the remainder to the treasurer. Ruffner, "Early History of Washington College," p. 24.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 8 November 1775.

Although these are modest beginnings for schools, they were important ones, for they represented in a sense a pinnacle of Presbyterian accomplishment in Colonial Virginia. They were a physical manifestation of the intention of this particular group of dissenters to take an active role in the future of Virginia and to make a contribution to its improvement.

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[1] George Craghead to Mr. Watkins (n.d.) quoted in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 400. Craghead was one of the students at the time the academy opened.

VII. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIRGINIA PRESBYTERIAN ACADEMIES

In establishing academies in Virginia, the Presbyterians were first, far from inventive, and secondly, they were thoroughly American. When the schools are considered in terms of their trustees, their faculty, their curriculum, and their students, it is clear that they follow the pattern pioneered by the College of New Jersey thirty years earlier, with certain influences attributable to Yale, which trained most of the early leaders of the College of New Jersey. This pattern, in turn, was repeated by the other denominational colleges which sprang from the Great Awakening--Queens, Rhode Island, and Dartmouth. That this should be so is hardly surprising since nearly every member of the presbytery, and particularly those involved in running the schools, was a graduate of the College of New Jersey. It was a tribute to that institution and her presidents that the alumni should wish to emulate her, although one might wish the planners of the schools had attempted to make adaptations to the needs of Virginia in a way such as Charles Jeffrey Smith had outlined for his school in the colony.

In one respect, however, the founders of these Virginia schools avoided certain pitfalls the founders of the newer colonial colleges had fallen into. Nearly all of them had been involved in disputes over charters and political controversies unrelated to education, or had encountered opposition from older institutions or from an established church.[1]

The Presbytery of Hanover had not involved itself in controversial political issues between 1755 and 1774. Although the presbytery opposed the proposed toleration bill brought before the assembly in 1772, their stand on this unpopular proposal did not jeopardize their chances of securing popular support for their schools. They encountered virtually no opposition from the College of William and Mary, for they did not style the two embryonic schools as colleges and made no claim to usurping the position of the institution at Williamsburg. The clergy of the established church, more worried about the increase of Baptists than Presbyterians, raised no objection to the new schools, and many prominent Anglican laymen willingly served as trustees for the Presbyterian institutions. And finally, the controversies which had nearly cost New Jersey and Dartmouth their charters[2] proved no problem to the presbytery because, in the fashion of the English dissenting academies, they did not apply to the legislature to charter their schools.[3]

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[1] McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies," pp. 27-28.

[2] Ibid., p. 27; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 19-22.

[3] The House of Burgesses met in June 1775, the only time after the decision to found the schools and before independence in which a request for a charter could have been made, but no such petition is recorded.

Nonetheless, there was some concern in the mind of the presbytery about the legal status of the schools, for in their petition against the proposed toleration act, composed in October 1774, only a month after the presbytery undertook to found the schools, they called the attention of the legislators to the right of the dissenters to maintain their own schools.

> And we also pray for a right by Law to hold Estates and enjoy Donations and Legacies for the Support of our Churches and Schools for the Instruction of our Youth. Though this is not expressed in the English Act of Toleration, yet the greatest Lawyers in England have pled, and the best Judges determined, that it is manifestly implied.[1]

Virginia honored the Elizabethan Statute of Charitable Uses of 1601 whose preamble included schools as recognized charities. Dissenting societies had maintained schools in England for many years under this statute, and the members of the presbytery had every reason to feel that they were within their rights in doing likewise.[2] The fact that the Presbyterians were establishing their own schools does not seem to have aroused the members of the House of Burgesses, for they took no notice of this portion of the toleration petition in their summary of it, and tabled the entire plea.[1]

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[1] Petition of Hanover Presbytery, 1774-1775 against the proposed Toleration Act of 1772. Quoted in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 556. This petition, composed at a presbytery meeting 11 November 1774, was presented to the House of 5 June 1775, and will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

[2] David Owen, English Philanthropy, 1660-1960, pp. 70-71; Irving G. Wyllie, "The Search for an American Law of Charity, 1776-1844," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLVI (September 1959), p. 206.

Because the founders of these schools acted on a more modest scale than the founders of the newer colonial colleges, there was another significant difference between Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall and Dartmouth or Princeton--namely that of size. The fund raising effort in Virginia was a purely local one. No appeal was made through the synod to Presbyterians all over the colonies as Princeton and Newark Academy had done,[2] nor was a major campaign conducted among British dissenters, a course which had proved so lucrative for Princeton and Dartmouth.[3]

When the beginnings of these two Virginia academies are compared with those of the mid-century colonial colleges, the efforts of the Virginia Presbyterians seem indeed small. Twenty years earlier Davies and Tennent had raised over £2000 in Great Britain for the construction of Nassau Hall.[4] The trustees of the other colleges, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Queens, and Kings, each invested approximately £5000 to erect and furnish the main hall and provide a library and scientific apparatus.[1] The total outlay for Liberty Hall seems to have been £700 and that of Hampden-Sydney £1000. The facilities of these academies were obviously inferior to those of the colleges, and in this purely physical sense these schools could hardly be considered collegiate institutions in 1776, even though they developed into colleges within a few years. On the other hand, none of the new colleges which were founded as such had been erected, furnished, and placed in operation within one year, so it seems unreasonable to think that the Virginia Presbyterians could have done this either.

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[1] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 5 June 1775, p. 189.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 11 October 1769, 9 October 1771.

[3] Davies Diary 1754-1755 in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, passim; Richardson, An Indian Preacher in England, passim.

[4] Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896, pp. 34-35.

The modest financial investment in the Virginia schools in contrast to the colonial colleges, and the fact that they did not apply for college charters but advertised themselves as academies raises the question whether we are justified in comparing them with these colleges and treating them as institutions of higher education. The answer must be in the affirmative because there is evidence that their founders looked upon them as such. Philip Fithian, a classmate of Graham's at Princeton, commented on Graham's plans for his school that, "he thinks to enlarge his Method of Education so much as to finish Youth in their Classical, & Philosophical Studies" a process only considered "finished" at the collegiate level.[1] John Brown, writing in August 1775 seemed to feel that the Virginia Presbyterians were overreaching themselves in their school plans, and that one college, Princeton, was sufficient for the colonies.[2] Furthermore, in terms of the structure, faculty, and curriculum, the Virginia academies at least attempted to operate like the colonial colleges.

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[1] McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies," p. 31.

The selection of trustees to manage the affairs of these schools was a direct departure from the usual Presbyterian practice for classical or Latin grammar schools and a direct emulation of the practice at Princeton, the only Presbyterian college in the colonies. The excellent Pennsylvania Presbyterian academies such as those of Robert Smith, Samuel Blair, and Francis Alison, and the Virginia schools of John Todd and John Brown, were always the operation of a single individual. The introduction of trustees to the Virginia Presbyterian academies was a move towards institutionalization as well as one toward expansion in the direction of collegiate work. Because the new schools received no financial support from the presbytery or from the state, their success as institutions would depend in large part on the ability of the trustees to raise the funds.

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[1] Albion, Fithian Journal, p. 150.

[2] Brown to Preston, 24 August 1775, Preston Papers, Draper Collection, 4QQ31, Wisconsin State Historical Society.

The composition of the boards of trustees of the two Virginia schools followed the plan pioneered in America by the College of New Jersey: a membership of nonresident, nonacademic personnel, many but not all of them clergymen affiliated with the sponsoring denomination, and independent of control or support from the government. This contrasted with the pattern established at William and Mary of control by a body of resident professors and the president in the tradition of the English colleges, and of financial aid from both church and state.[1] The board of trustees for Prince Edward Academy consisted of twelve laymen and five clergymen, while that of Liberty Hall was composed of nineteen laymen and five clergymen. The great majority of the lay trustees of Liberty Hall were probably Presbyterian, which is a natural choice for a school to serve an area in which the majority of the residents were dissenters. It is somewhat surprising to find, therefore, in that period of rigid denominational lines, that a majority of the trustees of Hampden-Sidney were Anglicans, even though the school served a part of the colony in which dissenters were not in the majority.

The inclusion of prominent Anglicans among the trustees may have been designed to quell criticism of the Presbyterian venture. We know that a certain amount of antagonism to the academy existed but we cannot be sure of its extent. Certain members of the established church in Cumberland County, directly north of Prince Edward, felt sufficiently threatened by the proposed Presbyterian academy that they moved to expand their own small school in Littleton Parish to offer a comparable program. Greek, Latin, and mathematics were to be added in October 1775, and natural and moral philosophy as soon as practicable. That school's advertisement in the Virginia Gazette scarcely masks a crude attack on Prince Edward Academy before its doors opened.

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[1] Richard Hofstadter, Academic Freedom in the Age of the College (New York: Columbia University Press, Columbia Paperbacks Edition, 1961), pp. 143, 130-131. In 1763 the nonresident lay visitors overthrew the control of the faculty and president of William and Mary and changed this pattern.

> From the many unnecessary Divisions, and erroneous Tennets, propagated among us, and the general Prevalency of Ignorance, Enthusiasm, and Impiety, among the lower Class of People, may be perceived the Necessity of having our Youth educated under the immediate Care and Superintendency of such as are Members of our Happy Establishment, and of approved Morals.[1]

A direct public attack on the Presbyterian school has survived as an open letter to Smith in the Virginia Gazette of 18 November 1775 by an anonymous bigot who called himself "Luther." He warned that the Presbyterian graduates of the new academy would soon fill the Virginia legislature and make their church the established religion.[2] Smith's careful reply to him should have quashed any fears of this sort, for he stated of the presbytery

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[1] Advertisement in (Dixon & Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 9 September 1775.

[2] A. J. Morrison, College of Hampden-Sydney: Dictionary of Biography, 1776-1825 (Published by Hampden-Sydney College, 1921), p. 16.

> that they might extend the utility of the institution they have now yielded the power of visitation and of managing the general concern of the Academy into the hands of trustees who are chiefly of the Church of England.[1]

William and Mary had been the subject of periodic public and private criticism in the years preceding the Revolution.[2] Thomas Jefferson, a frequent critic of his alma mater, had been appointed in 1776 by the Virginia General Assembly to the committee to revise the laws of the state, including the charter of the college. While the revision was in process, the visitors of the college filed misconduct charges against the president, a professor of divinity, and the master of the Indian School.[3] The president's defense of himself was unsatisfactory, and in August 1777 the visitors appointed the Reverend James Madison, cousin of the future president, as president. The visitors met frequently in 1777-1779, partly to devise means of raising funds for the school, and partly in an effort to enact changes of their own which might please the legislature while being far less radical than those envisioned by Jefferson.[1]

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[1] Quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, pp. 227-228.

[2] See for example Richard Henry Lee to William Lee in The Letters of Richard Henry Lee, Volume I, 1762-1778, ed. by James Curtis Ballagh (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), pp. 70-71; "County Justice" (Rind), Virginia Gazette, 30 December 1773; "Academicus," ibid., 19 May 1774; "B. R. to Mr. Purdie" (Purdie & Dixon), ibid., 12 May 1774.

[3] (Dixon & Hunter), Virginia Gazette, 4 April 1777; (Purdie), ibid.

Jefferson planned a system of statewide education beginning with local elementary schools whose best students would move on to regional secondary schools, and in the winnowing process the top scholars would be sent to the university. William and Mary would be completely restructured as the state university, with the number and power of the visitors reduced, the control of the established church over the college eliminated, and the professorships increased and modernized to include law, medicine, ancient and modern languages, history, mathematics, fine arts, and philosophy.[2]

News of Jefferson's proposed changes in Virginia education spread throughout the colony by word of mouth[3] and alarmed not only those conservative members of the Board of Visitors of William and Mary, but also the Presbyterians who, because of their academies, felt they had an important stake in any plans for the future of higher education in the state. In March 1779 Samuel Stanhope Smith, probably considered by Presbyterians their chief spokesman on educational matters, addressed himself to Jefferson on the subject of control of the school system. Smith was pessimistic about the execution of Jefferson's education plan because many people would not trust a schoolmaster chosen by the state if his religious views differed from theirs just as they had shown they would not accept the church the state chose for them.

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[1] (Dixon & Hunter), Virginia Gazette 22 August 1777; 23 January 1778; 18 June 1779; 15 November 1779.

[2] Ray J. Honeywell, Harvard Studies in Education, Vol. XVI: The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), pp. 8, 11, 205-210.

[3] Although the House of Delegates had ordered the public printer in December 1778 to send 4 copies of the act to each county, a shortage of paper had made this impossible, so that news could only have spread verbally. Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Volume 2, 1777 to 18 June 1779, Including the Revisal of the Laws, 1776-1786 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 249n.

> I observe that William & Mary is to be the university; and her visitors and professors will enjoy the power of appointing the academical and other masters, and of prescribing the system of education. Be assured, Sir, that while she continues under her present influence, the proposal will alarm the whole body of Presbyterians. . . . They are a numerous body, and not destitute of learning, whose concurrance may be found necessary on the present occasion, and whose composition may embarrass, if not disconcert any general scheme of education wherein they are neglected, and likely to be undermined.[1]

Reconciliation of the problem of denominational control of the high schools and university would alleviate the opposition Smith posited. That Smith should suggest participation of Presbyterians in the operation of the university is not an extraordinary proposal, but he went a step farther in his design to achieve that end and thereby protect the already considerable

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[1] Samuel Stanhope Smith to Thomas Jefferson [March?] 1779, Ibid., II, 246-249. Smith indicates here he has seen the plan printed, but this was not possible, and he confesses to not having seen it in his next letter to Jefferson. Ibid., pp. 252-253.

Presbyterian investment in education in Virginia. Smith proposed that

> Whereas if they [Episcopalians and Presbyterians] were united under one denomination their efforts instead of being divided and opposed, would concenter on one object, and concur in advancing the same important enterprize. My extreme love of peace, of that benevolence which my religion recommends, and of enlarged and liberal inquiry in matters of science, makes me wish for a union, at least of the two capital sects of christians [in] this state. And this appears to me to be the most favorable moment in which such a design could be proposed.[1]

Jefferson, who trusted the Episcopalians no more than Smith, must nonetheless have been surprised by such a bold admission of what many Virginians had suspected was the desire of Presbyterians to share more actively in the power structure. He hastened to write Smith explaining in detail his education bills and correcting Smith's misunderstanding that William and Mary would be under Episcopal control.[2] Smith, however, still mistrusted that institution and wrote Jefferson that

> It is difficult however to persuade a very considerable part of the State that that institution can ever be delivered from the influence of party; and that, being the principal hope of a Church already greatly mortified to have fallen from absolute power, every effort will not be exerted to retain it in its former channel.[3]

Smith welcomed Jefferson's efforts to decrease the power of the visitors, but still wondered if the location in Williamsburg would not result in the appointment of visitors solely from that area who would be "by their situation and their prejudices more liable to religious partialities than those in the middle counties of the state." He suggested that the assembly select visitors from different denominations.[1] The implication in Smith's letter that the Presbyterians hoped to occupy some positions of power in the revolutionary structure of Virginia civil affairs, including the educational system, was borne out by an observation of Edmund Pendleton to Jefferson in 1779 that "I fear the Rockbridge Deputies want to be Satisfied that your Bill encourages a Presbyterian, not a Liberal Education."[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 248.

[2] Thomas Jefferson's letter is missing, but the thrust of it can be gathered from Smith's reply. Ibid., p. 255n.

[3] Ibid., pp. 252-255.

The influence of the College of New Jersey on the faculty of the two schools is unquestionable, for every one of the original teachers was a graduate of that college. The rector of Liberty Hall, William Graham of the class of 1773, was characterized by a college friend as "sage, deep-studied," retaining

> with Dignity, the Inherent Gravity which he always supported in every Part of his Conduct while he was a Student at Nassau. The lines of Method, & Discipline have been inscribed & are yet visible & legible upon his Countenance!--[3]

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[1] *Ibid*., pp. 252-255.

[2] Edmund Pendleton to Thomas Jefferson, 11 May 1779, *ibid*., pp. 266-267. Rockbridge County, 90% Scots-Irish Presbyterian in population, was the location of Liberty Hall.

[3] Albion, *Fithian Journal*, 14 January 1776, p. 170.

Graham employed just one assistant at Liberty Hall, John Montgomery, a native of Augusta County, former student at John Brown's school, and a graduate of the College of New Jersey in 1775.[1] At Hampden-Sydney two men molded the minds of the faculty: John Witherspoon, the President of Princeton under whom each of them studied, and Robert Smith of Pequea, Pennsylvania, with whom all but one part-time tutor had worked or studied. Smith decided that he would need two tutors at Prince Edward, and on his trip north to purchase books, he engaged his younger brother, John Blair Smith, who had graduated first in his class at Princeton in 1773.[2] Next, Smith retained John Springer, a native of Stockholm who as a child had been kidnapped and brought to Virginia, then studied with Smith's father at Pequea before going on to Princeton.[3] Prince Edward Academy opened the doors of its incomplete buildings in January 1776 to a group of 110 students, which far exceeded the expectation of the trustees.[4] Springer was detained from coming to Virginia until

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 107; Wilson, Washington & Lee University Alumni Directory, p. 315.

[2] Charles Grier Sellers, "John Blair Smith," Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society, XXXIV (December 1956), p. 205.

[3] Morrison, College of Hampden-Sydney: Dictionary of Biography, pp. 28-29.

[4] Herbert Bradshaw and Edwin Hemphill, "Hampden Sydney College," (n.p., n.d.), Booklet at Virginia Historical Society, p. 3.

September 1776, and the Smith brothers found the students too many to handle without assistance.[1]

Accordingly, Smith employed Samuel Doak, son of Old Side Irish parents who emigrated from Pennsylvania to Augusta County where Samuel was born in 1749. He studied at John Brown's school, worked his way through Princeton, and after graduating in 1775 taught at Robert Smith's school in Pequea.[2] As a third assistant, Smith selected his brother-in-law, David Witherspoon, which may impair the assertion of a later president that the instruction at Hampden-Sydney was of college level from the beginning.[3] David, precocious but immature, graduated from Princeton without honors in 1774 at the age of sixteen. In the spring of 1776 the lad was undecided about his future and may have been hired more for availability than ability. His father wrote him a letter of parental guidance urging good manners, careful preparation for teaching his class in French; the value of keeping pen and ink handy to take notes; and the wisdom of using black lines on the paper until he can write straight without them! In defense of the school, young David seems to have been hired hastily when the school sorely needed a tutor and may not have been considered a regular faculty member, for he seems to have been supported by the £25 allowance from his father, and lived at Smith's house.[1]

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[1] Sometime in 1775 Springer was appointed tutor at the college of New Jersey and may have stayed at that job until late 1776 before going to Virginia. Collins, General Catalogue of Princeton University, p. 49.

[2] Morrison, College of Hampden-Sydney: Dictionary of Biography, p. 25; Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 392-393.

[3] Bradshaw and Hemphill, "Hampden-Sydney College," p. 3. The president referred to was Joseph Eggleston.

Although we may be skeptical of the contention of loyal alumni and later presidents that both Presbyterian academies in Virginia offered collegiate instruction from the time of their founding, it cannot be denied that the standards of the College of New Jersey exercised a very powerful influence upon the new academies. At the time Hampden-Sydney was organized, Smith wrote of it

> The system of education will resemble that which is adopted in the College of New Jersey, save that a more particular attention shall be paid to the cultivation of the English language than is usually done in places of public education.[2]

Information about the curriculum at Liberty Hall is less exact than for Hampden-Sydney, but a student there about 1782 wrote that "the course of study in the Academy was precisely the same as that pursued at Princeton while Mr. Graham was a student in that college,"[1] and it does not seem unreasonable to think that this may have been the case from the beginning.

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[1] Varnum L. Collins, President Witherspoon (2 vols.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925), I, 193-195. As early as early as 1778 David may have returned north, and in 1780 became secretary to the president of Continental Congress. He later settled in New Bern, N. C., to practice law.

[2] Advertisement in (Dixon & Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 7 October 1775.

The Princeton curriculum had originally been patterned largely on that of Yale, alma mater of the first three Princeton presidents, and it provided a good mixture of classical and scientific subjects.[2] A subscription blank from Prince Edward Academy dated 12 November 1774 stated that Smith intended to emphasize geography to a greater extent than most schools, and to relate it to a study of history and "the science of chronology."[3] In this we can imagine young Smith patterning his school on his father-in-law's Princeton. Witherspoon introduced geography as a sophomore course and also gave lectures on chronology and history to supplement the curriculum.[4] Smith also planned to provide solid instruction in arithmetic, algebra and geometry, and particularly surveying, all courses which had been pioneered in the past century by the English-dissenting academies, and which were taught at Princeton.[1]

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[1] Archibald Alexander, "Address Before the Alumni of Washington College," Washington and Lee Historical Papers, No. 1, p. 131.

[2] Francis L. Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics, and Politics: The Curriculum of the College of New Jersey, 1746-1794," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, VI (January 1949), pp. 45-47.

[3] Quoted in Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 227n.

[4] Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896, p. 90. By 1776 Witherspoon had established geography as a regular course. John Witherspoon, "Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, and other West Indian Islands in Behalf of the College of New Jersey," from the Pennsylvania Gazette, 28 October 1772, reprinted in William Nelson, ed., Archives of New Jersey, First Series, XXVIII, p. 298.

Both Smith and Graham placed such emphasis on scientific education that they took great pains to provide their schools with good laboratories. This was in keeping with the latest trend among the colonial colleges which had been slow to introduce science into the curriculum. Not until John Winthrop's professorship at Harvard after 1738 and Thomas Clap and Ezra Stiles' leadership at Yale after 1739 did Newtonian science take an important place in American education.[2] Only with the arrival in 1758 of a Scot, William Small, did scientific teaching at William and Mary equal that in these northern colleges.[3] Among the new colleges, Kings and Philadelphia included professorships of natural philosophy from the beginning.

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[1] Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, p. 227n; Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896, p. 92.

[2] Brooke Hindle, The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735-1789 (Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1956), pp. 87-88; Dirk J. Struik, Yankee Science in the Making (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1948), p. 149.

[3] Small, a graduate of Aberdeen University and a student of medicine, taught mathematics and philosophy on a modern lecture basis, and before he returned to England in 1764 he stimulated in young Jefferson a lifelong interest in science. Hindle, Pursuit of Science, pp. 91-92; Richard Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, 7.

The College of New Jersey was, in fact, the last colonial college to establish a chair in science (1768) and it was not occupied until 1771.[1]

Although science at Princeton had been taught by ministers "in possession of some haphazard information on the laws of nature and logic,"[2] rather than by trained scientists, until 1768, Princeton assumed a position of leadership in American science with the arrival of Witherspoon. The enlightened Scot augmented the scientific books in the library, spent Ł250 for scientific apparatus, and appointed a countryman, William Churchill Houston, as librarian and curator of apparatus. In 1771 Houston was made professor of mathematics and natural philosophy, and the trustees installed David Rittenhouse's remarkable orrery, purchased for Ł416.[3] This caused Witherspoon to boast that the college's scientific apparatus was equal, "if not superior to any on the Continent."[1]

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[1] Hindle, Pursuit of Science, pp. 89-90. Provost William Smith planned to devote 40% of the Philadelphia curriculum to science courses.

[2] Struik, Yankee Science in the Making, p. 149. Burr and Davies both corresponded with Philip Doddridge, pioneer in the introduction of science at his famous dissenting academy at Northampton, England, seeking assistance in the selection of courses and textbooks. In 1751 Burr spent Ł100 to purchase an "electrical machine." Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics and Politics," pp. 45-47, 52; Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896, p. 107, from A Catalogue of Books in the Library of the College of New Jersey, prepared by Davies in 1760.

[3] Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896, p. 108; Broderick, "Pulpit, Physics, and Politics," pp. 52, 60-61. It was not until 1771 that money finally became available for the chair which had been established in 1769.

The entire faculty of both new Virginia academies had been at Princeton when this training in physics first became available, and all of them must have absorbed some of Witherspoon and Houston's enthusiasm and knowledge. With the meager funds available to them, Graham and Smith tried to transfer this enthusiasm into adequate laboratories. Graham left an account of his selections with the presbytery, so that we have a good picture of this laboratory on the southern frontier. For about £75 he purchased an air pump, an electric machine, a sextant, a microscope, a set of maps, and a pair of globes.[2] While these may have been the finest laboratories west of the Tidewater, they were probably only half the size of the equipment at William and Mary.

In 1767 William Small, who had returned to England permanently, purchased for the Board of Visitors at William and Mary a selection of laboratory equipment. This included a telescope, microscope, barometer, electrical machine, compass, air pump, solar microscope, lenses, prisms, mirrors, glasses and specula for optical experiments, a quadrant, a scale, pulleys and weights, a pendulum, quicksilver, a cone, a Dr. Barker's mill, and an "instrument to try the force of falling bodies." The visitors paid Small Ł50, although the actual cost of the apparatus was Ł154.[1] Liberty Hall and Hampden-Sydney, with their much smaller laboratories could not offer scientific training as advanced as that available to Virginians at William and Mary. In fact, much of the work at the Presbyterian schools may have been inferior to that in the capital simply because the college masters were educated in the sophisticated atmosphere of England while the young Presbyterian teachers from rural settlements experienced their closest brush with sophistication in their sojourn at Princeton. Certainly the scientific training at Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall was inferior to that at Yale, Harvard, Philadelphia, and New Jersey, but it was surely as good as that at Queens, Rhode Island, and Dartmouth.[2] What Graham lacked in apparatus he must have compensated with his own enthusiasm, for he often experimented independently with his laboratory and invited the public to demonstrations of his experiments.[3]

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[1] Witherspoon, "Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica, . . .," p. 299.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 27 October 1775; Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 449.

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[1] Dr. William Small's Accounts from "Papers Relating to the College," William and Mary Quarterly, first series, XVI (January 1908), pp. 165-168.

[2] McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies," pp. 29-30.

[3] Alexander, "Address before the Alumni . . . ," p. 132.

If indeed the new Virginia academies modelled their curricula on that of New Jersey, the strong emphasis on scientific work was reserved for the final two years. The beginning student, in addition to the work in English which Smith decreed, devoted most of his time to Latin, Greek, and rhetoric, adding geography, mathematics, and some philosophy in the second year. The more advanced students tackled mathematics, physics, and possibly a modern language in the third year, and the senior class read in the higher classics, continued mathematics and physics, and completed their studies with the president's course in moral philosophy.[1] Witherspoon's famous moral philosophy course was a combination of ethics, metaphysics, and religion, with a strong emphasis on practical politics.[2] The students at Graham's school were heavily under the Witherspoon influence, to the extent of transcribing his lectures on Moral Philosophy and Criticism, just as Graham himself had learned them a few years earlier.[3]

In spite of efforts to approximate the New Jersey curriculum and operate the schools at a collegiate level from the beginning, the fact remains that neither academy was recognized as a college until chartered by the legislature in the 1780's, and many of the early students went on to complete their education elsewhere. Joseph and William Cabell, nephew and son of Hampden-Sydney trustee Colonel William Cabell, went from that school to William and Mary, as did William, the younger brother of trustee of the academy and future president of the new nation, James Madison. Richard Venable, son of another trustee went on to the College of New Jersey.[1] The Reverend John Brown, whose sons had studied at the Timber Ridge school operated by their father, did not permit his children to remain there even after its expansion and improvement under Graham, but instead sent them on to William and Mary with the financial assistance of their uncle William Preston, a trustee of Liberty Hall.[2]

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[1] Witherspoon, "Address to the Inhabitants of Jamaica . . . ," p. 298.

[2] Sellers, "John Blair Smith," p. 204.

[3] James W. Alexander, The Life of Archibald Alexander, First Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New Jersey (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1856), p. 23.

For students, both schools drew heavily on local families. The Liberty Hall students came from many of the same Valley families who had sent sons to John Brown's school. Although we do not know the precise number of students, we can assume it remained about the same as it had in a peak year before the presbytery assumed management. In February 1774

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[1] Morrison, Hampden-Sydney Dictionary of Biography, pp. 22, 32-35, 38-39; William Cabell Diaries, 28 May 1778, 4 May 1779.

[2] John Brown, Jr. to William Preston, 30 March 1779, 5QQ1; 7 March 1780, 5QQ20; 11 March 1780, 5QQ22. Preston Papers, Draper Collection.

Brown wrote that "Our school flourishes, there is now 23 hopful [*sic*] Boys at it pulling away ambitiously . . . ."[1]

The initial enrollment of one hundred ten students at Hampden-Sydney was remarkable, considering that most of the newer colleges had less than fifty students. They ranged in age from fourteen to twenty years, with over half of them above sixteen.[2] The large enrollment not only caused additions to the teaching staff, but put a hardship on boarding facilities. The steward boarded seventy-five students at £8 a year for food plus £3 for laundry, but the remainder had to secure board in the neighborhood. The £4 tuition, set by the presbytery, was to provide faculty salaries.[3] In comparison with northern colleges the charges at Hampden-Sydney were low, for Rhode Island was the cheapest at £22/6, New Jersey at £26/6, and Kings the most expensive at £32/13.[4] The costs were in line with the Virginia expectations however, for in 1774 William and Mary cost £15, and tuition and board in a family with a tutor cost about £20.[5]

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[1] John Brown to William Preston, 18 February 1774, Preston Papers, Draper Collection, 3QQ8.

[2] McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies," pp. 32-33; a twenty year old student died the first summer. Those students over sixteen formed a militia company of about 65 members. Foote, *Sketches of Virginia*, I, 400.

[3] Foote, *Sketches of Virginia*, I, 395-396, 400-401.

[4] Beverly McAnear, "The Selection of Alma Mater by Pre-Revolutionary Students," *Pennsylvania Magazine*, LXXIII (October 1949), p. 433. Figures above are for the year 1774.

[5] Farish, *Journal of Philip Vickers Fithian*, p. 87; William Cabell Diaries, 15 March 1770, 17 June 1773. In 1770

The students at Hampden-Sydney modelled their extracurricular activities on those at the College of New Jersey and in 1776 established two societies, the Cliosophic and the Tully Whitefield, which soon became the American Whig. These were probably founded under faculty sponsorship, for the entire faculty had been members of the American Whig society at New Jersey, whose rival there was the Cliosophic. One of the major functions of the groups was to provide the boys a debate forum in which to sharpen their political ideas in much the same way young Princetonians did in the years preceding the Revolution.[1] We have no information of such groups at Liberty Hall, but with a smaller student body they may not have been necessary. We know that within a few years the Liberty Hall students presented plays to the public, more to improve their abilities in public speaking than to amuse.[2]

The outbreak of the Revolution produced two significant changes at Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall just as each was settling into a successful modus operandi as a dissenting academy. The first, and more significant, change was a boldness on

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Cabell paid Ł20 for each of his two boys to be schooled with a neighbor, and in 1773 paid Ł24 board.

[1] From a letter of George Craghead recalling early years at the school in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 402. On the American Whig Society see Jacob N. Beam, The American Whig Society of Princeton University (Princeton, N.J.: Published by the Society, 1933), pp. 1-25; and Morrison, Hampden-Sydney College: Dictionary of Biography, p. 19.

[2] Alexander, Life of Archibald Alexander, p. 23.

the part of the trustees once all things English, including the established church, were under attack. On November 16, 1776, at the first session of the new House of Delegates, the Hampden-Sydney trustees presented a memorial requesting funds from the Virginia General Assembly for the construction of dormitories to house the large enrollment.[1] This request for public funds to support a Presbyterian school in Virginia, where in spite of the Revolution, the Anglican church was still established, indicates that these Presbyterians and their Anglican supporters were no longer content with the status of a tolerated sect.

From a purely practical viewpoint, the trustees must have reasoned that, if the government could support William and Mary which at that time enrolled only eighteen college students and thirty grammar school students,[2] it might aid Hampden-Sydney which was providing a similar service to even more Virginians. They couched their arguments in the petition in terms of the vital public service in providing a reserve of trained leaders to replace "those who shall be torn from the Commonwealth by death or war" for they felt strongly that a young republic should not be "guided by the councils and defended by the arms of unskilled and unlettered men." The trustees further argued that higher education should not be in the hands of a single institution, and pointed out the benefits to English liberty of the rivalry between Oxford and Cambridge. As further proof that this school looked upon itself as an institution of higher learning from the outset, the trustees hoped that the legislature would incorporate the board "and grant the masters such usual exemptions as are deemed necessary to large literary societies."[1] The petition was referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances where it rested until the next session.

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[1] Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Anno Domini, 1776 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd and Co., 1828), 16 November, pp. 58-59.

[2] Fred Shelley, ed., "The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard in Virginia, 1777," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XLII (October 1954), p. 406.

In the spring of 1777 the House dismissed this petition and avoided the issue of state aid to denominational schools by passing an act "to permit the trustees of the academy of Hampden-Sydney, in the county of Prince Edward, to raise a sum of money by lottery, for certain purposes."[2] The purposes, as the managers explained to the public, were to raise £1260 to erect additional buildings "for the reception and entertainment of a great number of students who wish to be admitted." The Managers, Paul Carrington, William Cabell, James Madison, John Morton, Thomas Read, Nathaniel Venable, and Francis Watkins, hoped to sell 5600 tickets at $5.00, with 15% of the money raised to go to the school, the remainder in prizes.[1] The drawing was held on 31 July 1778, but it was not until more than a year later that all the accounts were settled and monies handed over to the school.[2] The lottery was not as successful as the managers had hoped, for inflationary wartime prices depreciated the value of what had been raised.

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[1] Journal of the House of Delegates,1776, pp. 58-59.

[2] (Dixon & Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 4 July 1777.

The next important changes at both schools were the interruption in the normal pattern of classes, the size of the enrollment, and the hardship caused by inflation as the events of the revolution touched the lives of all Virginians. The steward left abruptly in 1777 because fees paid were insufficient to board the students. The school would probably have discontinued had it not been for the generosity of three local planters, Nathaniel Venable, James Allen, Sr., and Captain John Morton who agreed to furnish provisions for 1778. They secured a new steward who raised charges for board from £11 to £20 and still lost money.[3]

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[1] Advertisement in (Purdie) Virginia Gazette, 4 July 1777, Supplement.

[2] William Cabell Diaries, 28 June 1777, 26 July 1778, 29 October 1778, 27 July 1779 and list of Tickets in the Hampden-Sydney Lottery to whom Sold, at end of diary. Tickets were distributed to the managers who sold part themselves and gave part to agents in other areas of the colony. Cabell sent 288 tickets to Sampson Matthews in Augusta County, a trustee of Liberty Hall. Matthews was unable to sell 102 of them. Cabell himself sold tickets to 86 individuals for a total of £448/10.

[3] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 401.

Just as these monetary difficulties occurred, Virginia was swept with an enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause that extended to the schools. Sometime in 1776 over sixty Hampden-Sydney students formed their own militia company, just as the students at Princeton had done in April of that year.[1] In September 1777 Governor Patrick Henry called for a militia company from Prince Edward to defend Williamsburg from an expected British invasion. With the consent of Samuel Smith the school volunteer company marched to the capital where they were disappointed to see no action in their six weeks' tour of duty.[2] The company was mustered out at vacation time, so the students returned to their homes, and many entered the army after vacation rather than returning to school.

When the Rockbridge County militia met in 1777 to select its quota assigned by the assembly, Graham addressed the soldiers, urging them to fill the quota with volunteers rather than conscripts. Graham volunteered first, and legend has it that he marched back and forth in front of the assembled men until enough had fallen in line behind him. Graham was chosen captain, and many of the men were probably present or former students of his.[1]

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[1] Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896, p. 57.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 400, 410-411; "Virginia Militia in the Revolution," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XVI (July 1906), pp. 80-81; "Pension Declaration of Wade Mosby," ibid., XVII (October 1909), pp. 441-442. John Blair Smith was captain, David Witherspoon lieutenant, Samuel Venable ensign. On 18 September 1777 Smith requested £146/11/1 pay owed his company.

This enthusiasm for the Revolution had a near disastrous effect on the academies because so few students returned for the academic year in 1778. The student body at Liberty Hall declined so that Graham could no longer support his family from tuition fees and he took up farming near Lexington, the county seat of Rockbridge. For a while he travelled to Timber Ridge to teach part time, but this arrangement suited neither him nor the students, and sometime in 1779 he abandoned the log schoolhouse so painstakingly built by the local people.[2] He did not abandon teaching altogether, for several students came to Lexington to continue their studies with him.

At Hampden-Sydney affairs were in a state of flux throughout the war. In addition to the physical discomfort of studying in unfinished buildings and temporary shacks, the students were turned over to new teachers every few months. Witherspoon did not remain a full year. James Mitchell, a young man who had grown up in Pequea then moved to Bedford County, Virginia,[3] taught in the summer of 1776. Doak departed at the end of that year and was replaced by Springer. Unfortunately, Springer's behavior did not meet with the approval of the trustees, and in May 1777 they suspended him for drunkenness and gambling. His successor, James Wilson, remained until May 1778 when he was replaced by Charles Wingfield, who had just completed his studies at Hampden-Sydney.[1]

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 451.

[2] Ibid., I, pp. 451-452.

[3] Morrison, College of Hampden-Sydney: Dictionary of Biography, pp. 26-27. Mitchell later studied theology with Graham, entered the ministry, married a daughter of The Rev. David Rice, and became a trustee.

Just as Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall were experiencing such severe reductions in the size of the student body and in operating monies, plans were being made in Hanover County to establish a third academy under Presbyterian leadership, but not under the direction of Hanover Presbytery.

Once again the moving figure in organizing the school was a young Presbyterian minister from Pennsylvania, Daniel McCalla, who came to Virginia seeking political asylum. A native of Neshaminy, where the Tennents had had their Log College, McCalla received his classical education under John Blair at Fagg's Manor, then went to the College of New Jersey where he graduated in 1766. At the request of several citizens of that city, he opened a small academy in Philadelphia. In his spare time he studied medicine, learned several modern languages, and read theology to prepare himself for the ministry. The First Presbytery of Philadelphia licensed him in 1772, and in 1774 he was ordained pastor of New Providence and Charleston churches.[1] About April 1776 the Continental Congress appointed McCalla chaplain to four regiments under Brigadier General William Thompson, which had been ordered to Canada as reinforcements to American troops there. McCalla was taken prisoner along with Thompson and some other officers at the defeat at Trois Rivières.[2] Late in 1776 he was paroled and returned to his congregation. There his prayers for the American cause placed him in danger of parole violation with the British in the area, so he fled to Virginia. McCalla established himself in Samuel Davies' former congregation but did not affiliate with the presbytery at first.

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 400-402.

At a time when Virginians felt especially conscious of the need for trained leaders to conduct affairs of state in the new republic, those in Hanover must have been highly pleased to have a preacher with long teaching experience in their midst. Within a few months of McCalla's arrival numerous subscribers "resolved . . . to use our utmost endeavors to establish an academy under the direction of the Rev. Mr. Daniel McCauley [sic] for the instruction of youth in the learned languages, arts and sciences, etc., . . . "[1]

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[1] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 320-21.

[2] "William Thompson," Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, VI, p. 75. Approximately 300 Americans were taken prisoner. See "Memoirs of John Lacey," in Henry Commager and Richard Morris, eds., The Spirit of 'Seventy Six: The Story of the American Revolution as told by Participants, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Co., 1958), I, 216-217.

By early 1778 two hundred individuals had paid subscriptions, and those giving over £10 met in March to select trustees. The board of trustees purchased 500 acres and erected the necessary buildings,[2] probably on a plan similar to those of Hampden-Sydney. The new school was named Washington-Henry Academy, to honor two Virginia heroes in the revolutionary cause, just as Samuel Smith had honored two English heroes of the seventeenth-century revolutions, John Hampden and Algernon Sydney, when he named his academy. It would appear that the trustees of Washington-Henry had been even more successful than those of Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall in organizing, building, and paying for the new school, in spite of the economic difficulties in the state as a result of the war. George Craghead, on whom we rely for much that we know of the first sessions at Hampden-Sydney, was removed from that school when it encountered its financial problems and placed in the new Washington-Henry Academy in November 1778.

From the beginning McCalla needed additional instructors at the school, and his first assistant was probably young William Wilson of Rockbridge County who had recently completed his classical studies under Brown and Graham. He taught at Washington-Henry "with great approbation" according to Foote, but in 1779 returned to the Valley to enter theological studies under Graham, and because the Hanover climate was unhealthy for him.[1]

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[1] Morrison, Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, p. 108.

[2] Ibid., p. 109.

The new academy seems to have prospered throughout 1778 and 1779, for on 22 January 1780 the trustees resolved to limit the enrollment to fifty until they could enlarge the buildings. At the time of this resolution about forty were enrolled, and the trustees advertised for eight or ten more students for the academic year. The tuition charge of ₤120 and boarding costs of ₤500 aptly illustrate the inflationary situation in Virginia when compared with the 1776 costs at Hampden-Sydney of ₤4 tuition and ₤11 board. The trustees appointed a new teacher, Reuben Clopton,[2] for that year. The Washington-Henry trustees seem to have maintained much closer control over the educational process than was ever attempted at Liberty Hall or Hampden-Sydney, for two trustees were to appear the second

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[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 108. In October 1779 Wilson was licensed by Hanover Presbytery, and in November 1780 he was ordained pastor of Augusta Stone Church.

[2] Clopton may have been related to William Clopton, who petitioned to build a Presbyterian meeting house on his land in New Kent County in the early stages of the evangelistic revival in Virginia in the 1740's. Robert Leland Bidwell, "The Morris Reading Houses: A Study in Dissent," (unpublished MA thesis, College of William and Mary, 1948), p. 87.

Friday of each month to hear recitations and report their findings to the next board meeting.[1]

Although McCalla remained in Hanover County until 1788, at which time he moved to South Carolina because of criticism of his "lack of discretion in social relations,"[2] a phrase which leaves his misdeeds to the imagination of the reader, he may have relinquished supervision of the academy as early as 1780, and definitely by 1782.[3]

The new principal of Washington-Henry Academy, John Durburrow Blair, was a cousin of Samuel Stanhope and John Blair Smith. His father, the Reverend John Blair, a Presbyterian missionary to Virginia in 1745-46, took over Samuel Blair's church and school, then in 1766 became the first professor of divinity at the College of New Jersey. Young John Blair had graduated from Princeton in 1775 and was recommended by Witherspoon for the job at Washington-Henry. Blair continued with the school, and after McCalla's departure became the minister of Pole Green church in Hanover County. Washington-Henry does not appear to have prospered at this time, for in 1792 Blair was enticed to open a small classical school in Richmond.[1]

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[1] Advertisement in (Dixon & Nicholson) Virginia Gazette, 19 February 1780.

[2] Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College during the Eighteenth Century (New York: Ansen D. F. Randolph & Co., 1872), pp. 109-110. From 1788 until his death in 1809, McCalla was pastor of a Congregational Church in Wappetaw, S. C. During this period he published numerous articles, including "Remarks on the Age of Reason," in 20 numbers; "Remarks on the Theatre and Public Amusements," in 13 numbers; "Hints on Education," in 14 numbers; "The Sovereignty of the People," in 12 numbers; and "Federal Sedition and Anti-Democracy," in 6 numbers.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 182 claims Blair was appointed in 1780, but Morrison, Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, p. 109 places his arrival in Virginia in 1782.

[4] George Wythe Munford, The Two Parsons; Cupids Sports; the Dream; and the Jewels of Virginia with a Biographical Sketch of the Author (Richmond: J. D. K. Sleight, 1884), pp. 34-35.

At Washington-Henry 1779 had been a good year. At Liberty Hall it had been so difficult that Graham moved the tiny school to his farm. At Hampden-Sydney affairs fell midway between these extremes. Although the turnover in tutors had been sharp, John Blair Smith had remained by his brother's side from the beginning, teaching at the academy and studying for the ministry in his spare time. In October 1779 after completing his trials, young Smith was ordained at the annual meeting of Hanover Presbytery at Prince Edward Courthouse. At this same meeting, Samuel Smith, who had maintained close ties with the synod and with the College of New Jersey, and who since the spring of 1779 had been negotiating with his father-in-law about a position at that college, requested dismissal from Hanover Presbytery in order to accept the professorship of moral philosophy at Princeton. The presbytery complied and immediately appointed John Blair Smith as the second president of Hampden-Sydney.[1] The speed with which the appointment was made seems to indicate either that the presbytery was aware of Smith's plans before his resignation and had already determined upon his brother as the ablest successor, or that the presbytery, anxious to keep the school functioning and unable to search for a successor at that time, simply did the best they could.

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[1] Alexander, Princeton during the Eighteenth Century, p. 182. There are no records of Washington-Henry 1790-97, and while the school continued through the Civil War, it was usually short of money, once destroyed by fire, and had a high turnover in the administration. Morrison, Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia, p. 109.

John Blair Smith's year began well, for he also succeeded his brother as pastor at Briery and Cumberland churches, and early in 1780 married Elizabeth Nash, daughter of trustee John Nash, Jr.[2] Unfortunately, as the year wore on, the war impinged further upon the operation of the school. In January 1781 after the battle of Cowpens, nearly every able-bodied man in the area had answered Greene's plea for troops,[3] and because those remaining at home were involved in providing supplies, Smith suspended classes at Hampden-Sydney.[4]

The dwindling student body, the decrease in funds, the turnover in faculty, and the interruption of courses which marked the wartime years at Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall were not visitations of ill fortune aimed solely at dissenter-sponsored schools, for William and Mary suffered changes that were at least as disturbing. Jefferson's education reform bill did not pass the legislature,[1] but sometime after he was elected governor of Virginia in June 1779, he was appointed one of the visitors of William and Mary, and in this capacity he worked to effect as much of his reform as possible. In December 1779 the visitors enacted several important changes within the framework of the original charter of the school. The grammar school was abolished. The original six professorships were changed from Hebrew, and divinity in the school of theology; rhetoric, logic and ethics, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics, both in the school of philosophy, Latin and Greek in the grammar school, and the Indian school, to law and police, anatomy and medicine, modern languages, and moral philosophy.[2] The Reverend James Madison continued as president as well as professor of natural philosophy and mathematics, and the Indian school was retained.[3] Classes, which had not been conducted for some months, were to resume the first of January 1780, but in fact did not for another six weeks.[4]

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[1] Sellers, "John Blair Smith," pp. 206-208.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 209.

[3] Bradshaw, *History of Prince Edward County*, p. 117; Foote, *Sketches of Virginia*, I, 412.

[4] Bradshaw, *History of Prince Edward County*, pp. 122-125.

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[1] Supra, p. 291.

[2] "A bill for Amending the Constitution of the College of William and Mary, and Substituting More Certain Revenues for Its Support," Papers of Thomas Jefferson, II, p. 540; Dumas Malone, Jefferson and His Time, Vol. I: Jefferson the Virginian (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1948), p. 285.

[3] (Dixon & Hunter) Virginia Gazette, 18 December 1779, 8 January 1780.

[4] Ibid., 5 February 1780.

In spite of the considerable changes William and Mary had been forced to undergo because of the war and because the times demanded a school more suited to the needs of Virginians, it managed to survive the war years in considerably better condition than the fledgling schools the Presbyterians had established. Washington-Henry, which had prospered so in the very years that William and Mary was undergoing its re-examination and revisions and that Hampden-Sydney and Liberty Hall were so reduced in size, emerged from the Revolution holding its own, and under a new president, but not appearing to progress significantly in size or influence.

Hampden-Sydney took a long time to recover. Although the fighting in Virginia ended at Yorktown, it was another full year before John Blair Smith was able to reopen his academy. In October 1782 he inserted a notice in the Virginia Gazette stating that the trustees were arranging repairs, had engaged a new steward who would provide board for £16, and that the school would be open on the first of November. The new curriculum included some radical departures from the original course offerings. Smith wrote that "The cultivation of the English language, Geography, Mathematics, and Philosophy, shall be the principal subjects of instruction, and a very accurate acquaintance with the Latin and Greek languages shall be added, where it is desired." Thus it would appear that the standard classical emphasis in pre-revolutionary American education was relegated to a secondary position in Southside

Virginia after the Revolution. There is a slight possibility that Smith made these changes in response to the modernization at William and Mary. However, the evidence seems stronger that he was merely conducting the school on a more elementary level. If so, this downgrading of the work is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the school was chartered to grant degrees the following spring. Smith also promised to hire a Frenchman to teach "the pronunciation, etc., of that tongue," if enough students were interested, and if they could locate enough grammar books.[1]

The presbytery, in preparation for the reopening of the academy, and in recognition of certain deficiencies in its management in the past, at Smith's suggestion and in agreement with the original constitution, enlarged the board of trustees,[2] and no longer felt obliged to include Anglicans among appointees. The new members included James Allen, an elder in the Presbyterian church for over a quarter century, former member of the Prince Edward Committee of Safety, and a financial supporter of the academy from its founding. Colonel Charles Allen was a county commissioner and an active Presbyterian.[3] William

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[1] Advertisement in (Nicholson & Prentis) Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser, 26 October 1782, in William and Mary Quarterly, 2nd Series, II (July 1922), pp. 211-212.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 24 October 1782.

[3] Briery Session Book, Vol. I, p. 208c, Virginia State Library; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 114, 140, 144-148, 110, 227.

Morton of Charlotte County, a hero of King's Mountain and Guilford Court House, became an elder in Cub Creek congregation in 1770.[1] Another member active in the Revolution was Joseph Parks, member of the Prince Edward Committee of Safety who served in two militia companies during the war and was a county commissioner. William Booker, an early member of Briery congregation, former justice of the peace, Committee of Safety member had also served in the July 1776 Virginia Convention.[2] Samuel Woodson Venable was the first alumnus of the school to serve on the board. His father Nathaniel Venable had been instrumental in founding the school.[3] Probably the only member of the established church among this new group of trustees was Colonel Thomas Scott, who had served Prince Edward County since 1754 as justice, coroner, sheriff, militia colonel, burgess in 1769, Committee of Safety member, and vestryman at St. Patrick's from 1762 until 1781.[4]

Liberty Hall, which was operating on a much reduced scale, first in Graham's new house near Lexington, then in a frame building on land donated by William Alexander,[5] at least had not been forced to close. This good fortune occurred principally because the Shenandoah Valley had not been invaded as the Prince Edward area had been.

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[1] Rouse, Reads and Their Relatives, pp. 183, 260, 502; Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 17 October 1770.

[2] Briery Sessions Book, Vol. I; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 54, 59, 108-113.

[3] Ibid., pp. 110-114, 117, 140, 133.

[4] Ibid., pp. 23, 30, 41, 53-55, 59, 61-62, 110.

[5] Archibald Alexander, "William Graham," in Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 367. William Alexander, a

During the latter war years Graham seems to have changed much of the emphasis of his own educational work. The instruction of his younger students he left to his assistants, while he devoted most of his own time to the preparation of ministerial candidates.[1] This arrangement must have been a hybrid cross between the "schools of the prophets" so common in Connecticut but also operated among Pennsylvania Presbyterians such as the Tennents and Samuel Blair and the graduate study of divinity available at Harvard and Yale which furnished the candidate with an MA for completing a loosely-defined course of study.[2] Graham's school had the benefit of a formal organization, direction by trustees, and some outside financial support which the "schools of the prophets" did not, but until 1782 when Liberty Hall was chartered by the legislature, it was unable to grant degrees as Yale and Harvard. In the first six years of Liberty Hall's operation under Graham, the

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merchant-farmer and son of an early settler on the Borden tract, had moved to Lexington in 1775. His son Archibald served as president of Hampden-Sydney, and became the first Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary. Alexander, Life of Archibald Alexander, p. 16.

[1] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 367; Alexander, Life of Archibald Alexander, p. 16.

[2] Mary Latimer Gambrell, Ministerial Training in Eighteenth-Century New England (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), pp. 84-88, 101-105.

membership of Hanover Presbytery increased from nine ordained ministers to seventeen, plus nine more candidates for the ministry.[1] Of the seventeen new ministers, thirteen are thought to have been students at Liberty Hall, and eight of them received the AB from the school, possibly soon after it was chartered.[2] Those who did not receive a degree from Liberty Hall may have completed their studies prior to 1780, or already had a degree from another college. Because most of them were ordained within a couple of years, and because Liberty Hall did not then grant the MA which was the customary divinity degree in the north, it seems fair to conclude that much of their time at Liberty Hall was devoted to theological training.

The training of so many young ministers in the war years may have been William Graham's most important contribution to education. This infusion of new blood into the Presbyterian church occurred just as the established church was entering a period of decline in Virginia culminating in disestablishment, and placed the Presbyterians, who had backed the Revolution and the concept of religious liberty, in a strong position. Several of these new young ministers moved to Kentucky, Tennessee, and western Virginia in the postwar years,[3] along with hundreds of Virginia veterans who were seeking wider opportunities in the west, and they helped establish the Presbyterian church firmly in those areas. The Presbytery recognized Graham's early contribution to theological education and hoped to lay plans for additional work in this area, for at the first regular meeting under peacetime conditions in May 1782, Graham was ordered to "draw up a plan for the regulation of students of Divinity in their studies and to present it to the next P^{by} at New Providence in Oct."[1] However, other educational worries seem to have occupied Graham and the presbytery, for the plan was not mentioned again.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 1776-1782, passim.

[2] Wilson, Washington and Lee Alumni Directory, p. 315.

[3] Doak moved to Tennessee, McConnel "beyond the Alleghenies" in 1787, James Crawford to Kentucky, Samuel Shannon and Adam Rankin to Kentucky in 1787. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 107-110.

Instead, at the October 1782 Presbytery meeting, at which time the enlarged board of trustees was appointed for Hampden-Sydney, Graham moved that the Liberty Hall trustees had not discharged their duties either, partly because they lived too far from the school. The Presbytery then appointed fifteen men to the board. The Presbytery had stated that the seven appointees to the Hampden-Sydney board were additions to the other trustees. This stipulation is not made for Liberty Hall, so it appears that an entirely new board was appointed. The original board had twenty-two members, eighteen laymen and four ministers. To add fifteen men and create a board of thirty-seven men for a school of about twenty-five students seems absurd. Graham's new board was of such different composition from the old board that it would appear that far more than distance from the school lay beneath his complaints. There were only seven laymen on the new board: Andrew Moore, John Wilson, John Lyle, James Trotter, Archibald Steward, Joseph Walker, and William Alexander.[1] None of these men were especially prominent politically. At least three, and probably the rest, were elders in the church: Alexander, Lyle, and Wilson; the latter two were known for their piety and stern, if not harsh, moral standards.[2] The eight clerical representatives to the new board were Caleb Wallace, Edward Crawford, Samuel Doak, Archibald Scott, John Montgomery, James McConnell, Benjamin Erwin, and William Wilson. All save Wallace, McConnell, and Erwin were products of Graham's divinity training and could probably be counted on to give Graham a completely free hand in the operation of the school.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 22 May 1782.

Much to their credit, the new trustees, sensing a strong need and opportunity for educational expansion in a new nation at peace, applied to the Virginia Assembly for a charter for the school. Before the end of 1782, Liberty Hall was incorporated with the right to grant degrees.[3] Recipients of these first degrees included two trustees, Wilson and Doak.[4]

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[1] _Ibid_., 24 October 1782.

[2] Alexander, _Life of Archibald Alexander_, pp. 8,33.

[3] McCabe, _Virginia Schools before and after the Revolution_, p. 31.

[4] Wilson, _Washington and Lee Alumni Directory_, p. 315.

Graham does not appear to have made any effort to revise his curriculum once the school was firmly re-established and chartered, for a student there at the time declared that Graham "always insisted on the importance of classical literature as the proper foundation of a liberal education."[1] In addition to the classics, natural and moral philosophy were featured, along with a strong emphasis on "practical mathematics, surveying, mensuration, and navigation."[2] This contrasted sharply with John Blair Smith's new curriculum at Hampden-Sydney with its emphasis on English, geography, mathematics, and French, and its relegation of classical studies to a very minor role.

The Hampden-Sydney trustees did not meet until mid-December 1782, and may not have felt in a position to request a charter from the state, but in the spring of 1783 they applied to the Assembly and received a charter changing the name of the school to the College of Hampden-Sydney.[3] The trustees named in the charter included all of the original board from 1775 with the exception of Samuel Leake who died, and Caleb Wallace, who had become a trustee at Liberty Hall. The seven additions made by the Presbytery in the fall of 1782 were included, and four new individuals named, plus John Blair Smith in place of his brother. The newest members were Brigadier General Robert

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[1] Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 368.

[2] J. W. Alexander, Life of Archibald Alexander, p. 23.

[3] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 404.

Lawson, attorney, member of the Prince Edward Committee of Safety, convention delegate, and former member of St. Patrick's vestry;[1] Colonel Everard Meade of Amelia County, who had been commander of Spottswood's 2nd Legion;[2] Richard Foster, justice of the peace for Prince Edward County and vestryman;[3] and Colonel Joel Watkins of "Woodfork" in Charlotte County, brother of trustee Francis Watkins, brother-in-law to trustee William Morton, and justice of the peace for many years.[4] One of the most curious members of the board was the Reverend Archibald McRoberts who had been elected in 1776 to fill the place vacated by the death of Leake. At the time he was the new rector of St. Patrick's parish in Prince Edward, a post he probably received because his reputation as an evangelical Anglican caused the vestry to hope that he might prevent further attrition to the popular Presbyterian churches in the county. By 1780 however, McRoberts had dissented from his own church and formed an Independent congregation, which in 1787 joined the Presbyterian Church.[5]

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[1] Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 51, 59, 108, 123, 239.

[2] Hutchinson & Rachal, Papers of James Madison, I, 282n.

[3] Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 43, 131, 140, 240. Foster had been a private in Capt. Samuel Overton's volunteers in the French and Indian Wars, the company that Samuel Davies addressed with such fervor.

[4] Hennemann, "Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College," p. 177; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 23, 25, 54.

[5] Hennemann, "Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College," p. 177; Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, pp. 238-239; William

Under the enlarged board of trustees Hampden-Sydney appears to have flourished, although it had difficulty changing its image from that of an academy to that of a college, even among its supporters.[1] In 1786, only months before the first class of seven graduated with bachelor's degrees, a letter to the newspaper praising Virginia schools said, "As to your Grammar Schools, it is hard indeed, that out of such a number you cannot find one to please you. There are a hive of them, from Alexandria to Prince Edward."[2]

The important thing to remember about these Presbyterian schools is that from their founding Virginians of all faiths patronized them on their educational merit rather than religious affiliation. In conjunction with this acceptance of the schools, some observations can be made in terms of what was happening which would affect education in Virginia. The Presbyterian academies had been founded to fill a general educational need in the colony as well as the specific need the Presbyterians felt for schools of their own. From the beginning the trustees of both Liberty Hall and Hampden-Sydney maintained that these academies were not intended as denominational schools. Hampden-Sydney and Washington-Henry were probably more successful in

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Meade, Old Churches, Ministers, and Families in Virginia, 2 Vols. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1857), I, 448-449.

[1] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 405.

[2] Letter of "Philomanthes" in Virginia Gazette & American Advertiser, 28 June 1786, reprinted in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XIX

attracting students of the established church than Liberty Hall because they were located in areas more accessible to the Anglican majority, while Liberty Hall was in the midst of Scots-Irish settlements in the valley. But it may also be argued that Graham deliberately made Liberty Hall a more Presbyterian school by devoting his own teaching efforts to training ministerial candidates and by obtaining a board of trustees composed of Presbyterian ministers and staunch laymen. If so, this does not indicate a very broad view of the aims and uses of education.

That the Presbyterians were so successful in obtaining charters for their schools may in some way be related to the transitional difficulties at William and Mary and to the general reluctance of Virginians to endorse an ambitious program of public education from elementary school through college such as that envisioned by Thomas Jefferson. Thus, at a crucial time when the attitudes of Virginians towards the role of education in a republic were being established, the success of the Presbyterians in founding two colleges was a strong argument in favor of privately-sponsored education.

The faculties of the two new colleges were limited in academic experience to the possession of a bachelor's degree from a single American institution, and in teaching experience to small academies. The curriculum at Liberty Hall was almost wholly lacking in inventiveness, and while that at Hampden-

Sydney had made important concessions to modernization, it fell far short of the course work offered at William and Mary under its reorganization of 1779-1780.

Graham and the Smiths and their many supporters in the presbytery and on the boards of trustees certainly deserve credit for the successes they achieved with their schools in spite of the difficult wartime conditions, and for making a solid education possible for many students who otherwise may have had none, but they must, at the same time, because of their success, take part of the blame for fixing a limited vision of educational quality and of the public responsibility for higher education upon Virginians, a vision that was not overcome until Jefferson founded the University of Virginia nearly half a century later.

VIII. PRESBYTERIANS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN VIRGINIA

The culmination of the intermittent struggle of dissenters for legal guaranties in Virginia occurred with the passage of the Act for Establishing Religious Freedom in 1786. Events leading to the passage of this act are complex and involve conflicting purposes of the various religious groups as well as the revolutionary ideals of political leaders in the state. Credit for the triumph of the liberal spirit as expressed in this act cannot be fairly assigned to a particular group or individual. By focusing on the Presbyterian Church and its leaders in Virginia in the years in which the fight for religious liberty was waged, the intent of this chapter is not just to restate the contributions of that church to that particular struggle, but to demonstrate what Presbyterianism signified in Virginia as the colony entered the revolutionary decade, and as it emerged to be for two generations the most powerful state in the nation.

The three most significant religious groups in Virginia in 1770-1776 were the Anglicans, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians. Much has been made of Jefferson's statement that "two-thirds of the people had become dissenters at the commencement of the [present] revolution."[1] The population of Virginia was about 550,000 in 1774,[2] and if Jefferson's proportion may be applied to that year, then about 200,000 Virginians[3] found their freedom of religion restricted. There are no reliable statistics on dissenters, but the estimates available indicate the number was not that large. Most, but not all, of the 100,000 frontier settlers were dissenters, but there can hardly have been another 100,000 dissenters in the east. Gewehr can only point to an estimated 10,000 Baptists and 2,500 Presbyterians there, and the 3,500 Methodists still considered themselves affiliated with the established church.[4] However, Jefferson may have been correct if he meant that two-thirds of the population had become disenchanted with the established church, for that venerable institution suffered from several serious weaknesses.

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[1] Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia [first printed 1785] (New York: Harper Torchback Edition, 1964), p. 150.

[2] Franklin B. Dexter, "Estimates of Population in the American Colonies," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, New Series, V (October 1887), pp. 42-44.

[3] Ibid., indicates that 40% of the Virginia population was slave. As they had no voice in church policy, I have based the figure of 200,000 dissenters on 65% of the white population of 330,000.

[4] George McLaren Brydon, "New Light on the History of the Church in Colonial Virginia," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, X (June 1941), pp. 89-91; Gewehr, Great Awakening in Virginia, pp. 117, 136, 145, 151, 155.

One of the greatest weaknesses lay in the inability of many of the English-born and educated ministers to accommodate their ideas to the needs of Virginia life. An early example of this attitude was the episode of the Two-Penny Acts in which a vocal minority of the clergy petitioned the Bishop of London in 1755 and the king in 1758 against relief measures passed by the Virginia General Assembly permitting the payment of salaries and debts in currency rather than a fixed tobacco rate because the crops had been disastrously small. Although the act affected all Virginians paid in tobacco, certain clergymen saw it as an attempt by colonials to undermine the church and brought suits against several vestries for full market value of the tobacco. Although the ministers lost most of these cases, they secured the king's repeal of the laws and got letters from the king and Board of Trade critical of the governor and assembly. This entrance of the clergy in imperial politics unleashed a feeling of rage in many quarters.[1] Although the one effect of the struggle may have been, as Brydon claims, to distinguish between the clerical minority who sympathized with England and the majority who identified with Virginia, it is difficult to deny that a significant effect was "to injure the prestige of the establishment, shake the confidence of the ministers and encourage the dissenters."[2]

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 288-308, 310.

[2] H. J. Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia: A Study in the Development of the Revolution

A major organizational difference from the church in England weakened the Virginia church. English law, in force in Virginia, provided for the trial of errant clergymen by ecclesiastical courts and forbade trial by civil courts. Because Virginia had no resident bishop, and after 1748 her commissaries were not empowered to hold such courts, there existed no mechanism for disciplining clergymen. Thus, several parishes were saddled with inducted ministers addicted to alcohol and the gaming table, and removable only by death. Efforts to establish discipline through the General Court in 1771 and the General Assembly in 1772 were not successful.[1]

The commissaries immediately preceding the Revolution were weak men. William Robinson (1761-1768) was appointed over the public protest of the governor and the private objections of many Virginians. His successor, James Horrocks, a "young and untried man," exercised little power beyond calling a clerical convention in 1771 to discuss the desirability of an American bishop.[2] The response to the episcopacy issue was

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(Richmond: D. Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1910), pp. 27-28. Others who agree with this view include Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 312 and Robert E. and B. K. Brown, Virginia, 1705-1786: Aristocracy or Democracy?, p. 259.

[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 344, 324-332; Journal of the House of Burgesses, 25 February, 27 March 1772.

[2] Brydon, II, 321-322, 334, 341-342; The elaborate efforts of the Anglican church in the northern colonies to secure a bishop made little headway among Virginians. See Carl Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

mild. Only twelve out of one hundred clergymen bothered to attend the convention, and four of them voted against joining northern Anglican clergymen in petitioning the king to appoint a bishop. Two of them protested the petition in the Virginia Gazette, for which they received the public thanks of the House of Burgesses.[1] Undoubtedly a bishop was needed to restore order and conduct vital services for the church, but few Virginians were willing to accept another costly, powerful English official whose presence would threaten to destroy the self-regulatory powers lay vestries had established over their own religious affairs.

In spite of these weaknesses, the majority of Virginians did not question the desirability of a church established by law and supported by assessment of all the people. Only considerable loyalty explains why many vestries in a tax-conscious age taxed themselves or contributed voluntarily to the construction of handsome new church buildings in the years before the Revolution.[2] There was a good supply of ministerial candidates for the Virginia church immediately preceding the Revolution, and the most significant fact is that of the thirty-nine who were licensed between 1771-1776, thirty-three were natives of Virginia or had lived there long enough to be recommended for ordination by a vestry wishing to hire them.[1] Many of the ministers were highly respected locally. In twenty of the sixty counties people elected their rectors as members of the revolutionary Committees of Safety, and thirteen clergymen were included in the non-importation association of 1774.[2]

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[1] (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette, 6 June, 13 June, 18 July 1771; Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 347-353.

[2] One example was Pohick Church, constructed 1769-1774, whose members included George Washington and George Mason. Helen Hill, George Mason: Constitutionalist (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 67-69. Others included Falls Church and Christ Church, Alexandria; Lamb's Creek Church, King George County; Little Fork Church, Culpeper County.

The established church was certainly not a dying institution on the eve of the Revolution, but it did suffer serious weaknesses and, as the increasing number of defectors testified, the dissenting denominations offered a very attractive alternative.

The Presbyterians, who had been the largest and most active dissenting group in Virginia for a generation, had won for themselves a position of strength and measure of respect throughout the colony in marked contrast to the opprobrium with which their New Light preachers and converts were greeted in the 1740's. When the independence movement brought with it appeals for religious freedom, the position occupied by the Presbyterians served as a leverage which they used to help bring the assembly to accept a position of complete liberty of conscience.

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[1] Fulham Papers, Vol. XXVI, Virginia Ordination, passim. G. M. Brydon, "Clergy of the Established Church in Virginia and the Revolution," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XLI (January 1933), pp. 12-13n. Of the candidates from Britain, most had been educated at the Scottish universities rather than at Oxford or Cambridge.

[2] G. M. Brydon, "New Light on the History of the Church," pp. 93-94.

There are at least four reasons for the Presbyterian strength in Virginia. The most obvious stems from the valiant efforts of the Scots-Irish frontiersmen serving as a buffer to protect the entire colony against Indian depredations in the French and Indian wars.

The respect Presbyterians demonstrated for legal standards set for dissenters, once the furor over the New Light preachers of the 1740's subsided, won them, in turn, the respect of the government. As the presbytery told Governor Fauquier, Presbyterians "chearfully submit to ye usual Tests of Loyalty & orthodoxy imposed by Authority upon Protestant Dissenters. . . ."[1] Furthermore, the presbytery insisted that ministers arrange to have a license procured from the county court or General Court before accepting an invitation to preach in a new area.[2]

The organizational structure of the Presbyterians improved their image in Virginia, for the Presbyterians established a good mechanism for the discipline of their laymen and ministers. The session of each congregation, composed of elected elders, meted out disciplinary measures to the membership. In contrast to Anglicans who exerted their disciplinary power on moral issues through civil courts, the Presbyterians punished such infractions through the congregational session which was empowered to suspend offenders from "Christian privileges." From 1755-1775 appeals to the Presbytery of Hanover from these session decisions involve charges of adultery, bigamy, fornication, illegitimacy, and incest.[1] Less significant cases such as drunkenness, gambling, and gossip-mongering were probably routine session matters that gave little occasion for appeal to the presbytery. In such cases, if punishment did not merit barring the individual from the church, it involved confession and repentance before the congregation or censure or admonishment. Thus the group exerted pressure on those who went astray, while those unwilling to have their personal lives scrutinized were under no obligation to remain Presbyterians.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 10 August 1756.

[2] *Ibid.*, 25 April 1759.

In regulating the conduct of ministers, the presbytery system was a more effective device than anything the established church could muster. There were two instances in the colonial period that the Presbytery of Hanover stripped members of their ministerial office. Standards of conduct were high, and the presbytery pronounced against such practices as shooting matches, dancing, and the use of "spirituous liquors and cakes" at funerals.[1] Many Anglican ministers who danced, gambled, and imbibed, would not have lasted long as members of Hanover Presbytery.

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[1] *Ibid.*, 13 July 1758, 26 April 1759, 25 September 1760, 2 April 1761, 4 May 1763, 2 May 1764, 12 April 1769, 16 October 1772, 12 April 1775, 3 May 1776.

The first minister suspended was John Wright, New Light preacher in Cumberland County, who had been reproved for drinking by the presbytery in 1759. A disproven charge of sodomy made by two other ministers did not help Wright's reputation, and after prominent members of his congregation testified in 1762 of his drunkenness on several occasions, the presbytery suspended him.[2] The other was Alexander Miller, an Old Side minister who had continual difficulties with his congregations at Cook's Creek and Peaked Mountain in present Rockingham County until the presbytery dissolved their relation in 1765.[3] After a complicated trial, the presbytery found Miller "guilty of excessive drinking, Contempt of Order & Authority; & false base & malicious Charges against several of the Ministers" and deposed him in 1766.[4] This vigorous action of the presbytery contrasts sharply with the inability of parishes of the established church to eliminate several ministers at least as obnoxious as Miller.[1]

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[1] Ibid., 6 October 1763, 16 October 1772.

[2] Ibid., 4 Oct. 1759, 25 Sept. 1760, 2 April 1761, 8 Oct. 1761, 7 April 1762, 16 April, 27 July, 7 Oct. 1762.

[3] Ibid., April 1760, 8 Oct. 1761, 3 Oct. 1764, May 1765.

[4] Ibid., 4 June 1766.

The final reason that most Virginians found Presbyterians acceptable by the time of the Revolution rests in the voluntaristic nature of that church. With a state church, membership is extended to and assumed of all citizens. Such a broad-based membership must embrace many undesirable elements whose conduct was not even nominally Christian. In contrast, membership in a Presbyterian congregation in Virginia was entirely voluntary, and required a positive act of joining the church on the part of the individual, even those Scots-Irish raised as Presbyterians. This voluntarism implies a measure of selectivity tending to eliminate those individuals not professing an active belief in Christian doctrine and unwilling to comply with the rigid moral standards of the group. Although the Presbyterians in Virginia were always happy to increase their membership, they did not intend to do so at the expense of the concept of voluntarism. When in 1760 the question arose "whether a professed Presbyterian living in the bounds of a particular Congregation, shall be deemed a Member thereof without his own Consent" the presbytery decided that the individual could not be forced to join the congregation.[1]

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[1] The Rev. Patrick Lunan of Nansemond County plagued his vestry for 15 years with his drunkenness. Unable to remove him even through the General Court, the vestry bought him off for £300 in 1775. Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 324-331.

It is to the credit of the Virginia General Assembly that its members, although overwhelmingly of the established church, sought, beginning in 1769, to grant dissenters the legal guaranties which had been practiced for fifteen years but never enacted. In May 1769 the House of Burgesses established an important new standing Committee for Religion with investigative powers, whose duty it was to consider all matters of religion and morality.[2] One of its first orders from the House was to prepare "a Bill for Exempting his Majesty's Protestant Dissenters from the Penalties of certain Laws"[3] to correct the fact that Virginia had never officially adopted the English toleration act. At a time when dissenters were more numerous than ever, when relations between the colony and mother country were strained, and Indian trouble threatened in the west, it must have seemed important to the Burgesses to clarify the position of dissenters in order to maximize the potential for internal unity.[4] The bill was never written, for the Governor prorogued the Assembly less than a week after the order to the committee.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 3 April 1760.

[2] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 8 May 1769.

[3] Ibid., 11 May 1769.

[4] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 373-374.

When the Assembly reconvened in November 1769 an enlarged Committee for Religion was ordered to prepare a "Bill for granting Toleration to his Majesty's Subjects being Protestant Dissenters,"[1] which may indicate a liberalization of opinion in the House, for "granting toleration" is a step forward from "exempting from penalties." However, the bill had not been presented by May 1770 when the regular Baptists petitioned for exemption of their ministers from militia duty and permission to preach in places not named in their licenses.[2] The Committee for Religion considered these requests, which were more liberal than any privileges sought by dissenters heretofore. Suddenly, on June 18 the House discharged the committee's instruction to prepare a toleration bill.

To explain this change of sentiment regarding toleration, Brydon conjectures that the rapid expansion of the Separate Baptists in 1769 and 1770 simply frightened the burgesses. This appeal of the Regular Baptists for extended privileges may have caused the legislators to think that extended toleration at that time would exacerbate internal dissension rather than calming it.[3]

Baptists, the third important church in colonial Virginia, had been peacefully tolerated in several locations in the colony for many years prior to 1760 when the Separate Baptists established their first meeting house in Pittsylvania County on the North Carolina border.[1] An important convert made there in 1759 was Samuel Harris, a former burgess, militia colonel, and vestryman who became an itinerant preacher and carried the Separate Baptist movement north into Culpeper and Orange counties in 1765. The following year Harris and an ordained minister from North Carolina held meetings in Spottsylvania, Caroline, Hanover, and Goochland counties, and churches were soon established in those areas.[2] Harris' enthusiasm was caught by a group of "young prophets" in Orange and Spottsylvania, including Lewis and Elijah Craig, John Waller, James Childs, and John Burrus who

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[1] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 11 November 1769.

[2] Ibid., 26 May 1770.

[3] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 376.

> sallied forth in every direction spreading the tidings of peace and salvation, wherever they went. Most of them illiterate . . . they would defend and maintain the cause of truth . . . undismayed by the terrific hosts of Satan, backed by the strong arm of civil authority.[3]

Certain characteristics of these Baptists meetings cropping up illegally all over Virginia, and which were well described by Semple, caused considerable concern to the authorities.

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[1] Lewis P. Little, Imprisoned Preachers and Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bell Co., Inc., 1938), pp. 28, 30, 32.

[2] Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond: John O'Lynch, 1810), pp. 6-8, 10.

[3] Ibid., p. 10.

> It was not uncommon, at their great meetings, for many hundreds of men to camp on the ground, in order to be present the next day. The night-meetings, thro' the great work of God, continued very late; the ministers would scarcely have an opportunity to sleep; sometimes the floor would be covered with persons, struck down under conviction for sin.[1]

These Separate Baptists aroused unusually strong opposition from two different segments of the Virginia population: the civil authorities and groups of the more lawless element in communities. Local authorities considered them a menace to public peace first because they refused to register themselves and their meeting houses with the courts in order to qualify for toleration. The fact that most of their preachers were not ordained would probably have meant that they could not have qualified under existing toleration provisions anyhow, and when it became obvious that attempts to prosecute preachers for failing to register were of little use, many local officials began to arrest these preachers on charges of disturbing the peace.[2] The first arrest occurred in Spottsylvania County in June 1768 when three of the "young prophets" were taken by the sheriff. They were imprisoned by the court when they refused to promise not to preach in the county for a year, and sang hymns as they were led through the streets of Fredericksburg to the jail.[3] From the windows of the jailhouse where they were held for nearly three months, the young men preached to crowds below, a scene that was repeated in many Virginia counties in the next seven years, during which nearly fifty Baptist preachers were imprisoned.[1] It is not difficult to imagine that this role as martyrs had large popular appeal, and many conversions were made in counties where preachers were jailed.

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[1] Semple, Rise and Progress, p. 10.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 181-183.

[3] Semple, Rise and Progress, pp. 14-19.

The violent reaction to their preaching on the part of various people sometimes acting as individuals, but more often as a mob, brought upon the Baptists a great deal of scorn which their actions did not merit from those Virginians most concerned with maintaining law and order. As early as 1765 when Samuel Harris first preached in Culpeper County, opponents appeared armed "with whips, sticks, clubs, &c. so as to hinder his labors."[2] In that same county the door to his preaching place was once battered down by a Captain Ball, and another time in Orange County he was dragged from the pulpit. On another occasion someone tried to shoot one of the Baptist preachers.[3]

In spite of, or perhaps partly because of, all this commotion, the Baptists flourished. At their first Separate Baptist Association meeting in May 1771 they received reports from fourteen churches in eleven counties with a total of 1,335 baptized members, where six years before there had been only one.[1]

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[1] Brydon, II, 182; Little, Imprisoned Preachers, passim.

[2] Semple, Rise and Progress, p. 7.

[3] Little, Imprisoned Preachers, pp. 47-48, 58, 60.

The fact that this group was expanding so rapidly, that it was the cause of such violence in many places, that its ministers had refused to cooperate in any way with the civil authorities, and that the Separates were schismatics who were not initially recognized by the Regular Baptists whom the Virginians had accepted, could only have convinced many a local magistrate and many a burgess that it would be dangerous for the peace and security of the colony to allow such a group any more freedom of action.

Once the subject of toleration legislation had been made public, however, it was difficult for the legislators to avoid returning to it. The possibility of the passage of a toleration act placed the Presbyterians in a peculiar position. They were committed to support such legislation by their having sought it in the past, and they probably expected that the bill, which was to have been written in 1770 would be a favorable one. The opposition aroused by the Separate Baptists throughout the colony threatened to upset the agreeable toleration arrangement the Presbyterians had enjoyed for some years and temporarily killed what might have been an even more agreeable bill.

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[1] Semple, Rise & Progress, p. 49. The counties were Amherst, Amelia, Bedford, Buckingham, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, Louisa, Orange, Spottsylvania, and Pittsylvania.

Consequently, it is not surprising to find the Presbyterians occasionally expressing hostility towards the Baptists, even though both denominations shared some problems in their position as dissenters. The Presbyterians had forgotten by the 1770's that just thirty years earlier their own New Light preachers had been viewed in much the same way as these Baptist itinerants, although the reaction had been less violent. One cannot help but feel that the Presbyterians considered themselves decidedly superior to the Baptists when one reads Samuel Stanhope Smith predicting that the denomination controlling higher education will control the government, and that

> This contest will chiefly lie betwixt the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians. The Baptists and Methodists content themselves with other kinds of illuminations than are afforded by human science.[1]

The Presbyterian congregation in Bedford County sounds more like the established church than a group of dissenters when it complains to the presbytery of

> the dangerous Situation of that part of the Church, from the Intrusion of the ignorant, tho' designing Sectaries, and praying for a Supply for two or three Months, of such a nature as might be suited to their Circumstances at present.[2]

It must have been with mixed feelings that the Presbyterians watched the action of the Assembly to see what would come of the toleration issue.

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[1] Samuel Stanhope Smith to Thomas Jefferson [March?], 1779, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, II, 247.

[2] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 26 October 1784.

The Assembly did not meet from June 1770 until February 1772 in which time the entire colony had an opportunity to form decided opinions on toleration. The issue was reintroduced soon after the session opened by similar petitions from Separate Baptists in Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Sussex, and Amelia complaining that they did not receive the "same kind of indulgence in religious Matters as Quakers, Presbyterians and other Protestant Dissenters enjoy."[1] On February 25 the Committee for Religion reported the petitions reasonable and was ordered to prepare a bill for toleration. The fact that they presented the bill just two days later indicates the committee had been working on its provisions for a considerable time. After two readings it was referred to the committee for amendment and remained there for three weeks.[2]

The provisions of this bill must have been freely available in Williamsburg, for in the first issue of the Virginia Gazette following the return of the bill to committee a very suggestive letter appeared. Addressing himself to A. W., presumably a burgess,[3] an anonymous writer indicated that a restatement of the English Toleration Act would be unsatisfactory because many dissenting sects could not subscribe to many of the Articles of Religion required. Posing the economic threat of emigration of many of these useful, peaceful citizens by forcing doctrinal restrictions on them, the writer proposed his own toleration plan.

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[1] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 12 February 1772.

[2] Ibid., 25 February 1772, 27 February 1772.

[3] This may have been Alexander White, Burgess from Hampshire County, member of the Committee for Religion, and son of a Scottish Presbyterian surgeon in the Royal Navy who had settled in Berkeley County in mid-century. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, II, 23.

> Instead of demanding a subscription to any of the articles of the church of England, extend your toleration to all who will subscribe to the belief of a Supreme Being, his government of the universe, and the obligations of morality. If this be not sufficient . . . add the truth of the Christian religion.[1]

Sentiments such as these made little good impression on the Committee for Religion which was chaired by the powerful treasurer of the colony, Robert Carter Nicholas, an ardent churchman. Nicholas, while calling himself a "warm friend to Toleration, and the just Rights and Liberties of Mankind, as well religious as civil," nonetheless attacked the Reverend Samuel Henley for his sympathies with the toleration scheme proposed to A. W. in the press,

> Can you think it decent that a Clergyman of the Established Church should set so light by her Articles? What was recommended, you know, is not allowed of in England. . . . Were I a minister of the Church of England . . . I should think it my bounden Duty to endeavour to display the superior Advantages of our Establishment, and the various and striking Beauties of our Liturgy.[2]

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[1] "To A. W." in (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 5 March 1772, p. 1. The author was probably the Rev. Thomas Gwatkin, a professor at William and Mary.

[2] "To the Reverend Mr. Henley" (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette supplement, 20 May 1773.

In the culmination of a series of letters between Nicholas and Henley, the treasurer expressed clearly his position on toleration. As chairman of the committee which prepared the bill, it may be presumed that the majority of the group were in agreement with him.

> If the Propriety of some Establishment is, as it must be, admitted; the Necessity of Rules and Articles must also be allowed: a Society without these is to me unintelligible. . . . You insist upon the Rights of Men to exercise their Private Judgements; I grant it; but don't insist farther upon their Right to PUBLICK PROMOTION too, be their Private Judgements what they will provided they think they are agreeable to Scripture; here we should for ever differ.[1]

Of the forty-one members of the Committee for Religion, twenty-three were from Tidewater counties where the church was firmly entrenched. Six were from Southside counties in which Baptists and Presbyterians were strong but none had particular connection with dissenters, and one, Archibald Cary of Chesterfield, had participated as a magistrate in the jailing of Baptist preachers.[2] Another six members were from Piedmont counties with numerous dissenters. These included Dabney Carr of Louisa who may have shared some of the anti-clericalism of his brother-in-law Thomas Jefferson,[3] and Patrick Henry who had been influenced by Samuel Davies as a youth and many of whose friends and relatives were Presbyterian. Of the six frontier and valley counties where the majority of the dissenters lived, four of the twelve Burgesses did not attend the 1772 session. Five of the eight attending, including two Presbyterians, John Bowyer of Botetourt and John Wilson of Augusta, were placed on the committee, a reasonable representation by colonial Virginia standards. None of these Burgesses from areas of dissenter strength wielded the political influence of Nicholas and his supporters on the committee who included Edmund Berkeley, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Richard Henry Lee, and Edmund Pendleton.

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[1] Robert Carter Nicholas to "The Gentleman who is pleased to style himself A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND" (Purdie & Dixon) Virginia Gazette, 3 June 1773.

[2] "Archibald Cary," Dictionary of American Biography, III, 554.

[3] "Dabney Carr," ibid., III, 505.

While a liberal statement on toleration might not be expected from such a committee, the bill presented was shockingly conservative. It required (1) registration of all meeting houses with the county court, (2) conduct of dissenting worship only in recorded houses, (3) unlocked doors during services, and (4) daytime services only. A minister failing to abide by these provisions would be bound to good behavior for one year in any sum the local justice might assess. On a second offense the minister would lose his license and the individual at whose home the unlicensed service was held would be heavily fined. Furthermore, any preacher inciting disobedience among slaves, attacking slavery as an institution in a sermon, or baptizing a slave without permission of the master was to be imprisoned for one year. The county court could summon any dissenting minister and require on pain of imprisonment, his sworn allegiance to the king and government and his subscription to believing everything in the Old and New Testaments as divinely inspired and true.[1]

The bill passed two readings, but in an unusual move before the third reading, the House ordered the bill engrossed and printed publicly, with the final vote postponed until July 1, 1772.[2]

There is no record of immediate reaction to the proposed bill registered in the press of the colony, and the governor prorogued the Assembly before the July 1 date for the vote, and before groups and individuals would have had an opportunity to petition the legislature regarding the bill. The next session, in March 1773 was prorogued before the end of that month and before any consideration could be given to the toleration question, so it was not until the spring of 1774 that the house had another opportunity to legislate religious matters. During the two years after the bill was published, the Burgesses had ample opportunity to sample opinions on toleration among their constituents, and the question was aired in the press.[3]

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[1] (Rind) Virginia Gazette, 26 March 1772.

[2] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 24 March 1772.

[3] Religious questions were constantly before the public eye. During the fall and winter of 1772-1773 Purdie and Dixon published a series of letters between "an Orthodox Layman" and

In Orange County a young graduate of the College of New Jersey who for the past year had been studying independently in theology and affairs of government, surveyed the prospects of a toleration bill in a letter to a Philadelphia friend.

> Our Assembly is to meet the first of May When It is expected something will be done in behalf of the Dissenters: Petitions I hear are already forming among the Persecuted Baptists and I fancy it is in the thoughts of the Presbyterians also to intercede for greater liberty in matters of Religion. For my part I can not help being very doubtful of their succeeding in the Attempt. The Affair was on the Carpet during the last Session; but such incredible and extravagant stories were told in the House of the monstrous effects of the Enthusiasm prevalent among the Sectaries and so greedily swallowed by their Enemies that I believe they lost footing by it. . . . We have it is true some persons in the Legislature of generous Principles both in Religion & Politicks but number not merit you know is necessary to carry points there.[1]

Madison was correct in surmising that the Presbyterians planned to urge greater religious liberty on the Assembly. At their meeting at Rockfish, Amherst County, in October 1773, Hanover Presbytery "took the Bill of Toleration into consideration, and judge it expedient that some two persons do attend the Assembly as Commissioners of the P^{by}, to transact that affair in their Name and behalf." The Rev. John Todd of Louisa and Capt. John Morton of Prince Edward were appointed to go to

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"a Christian Layman" on views of punishment in the after-life. Throughout the spring of 1773 Robert Carter Nicholas and the Rev. Samuel Henley exchanged critical views of each other's opinions on ecclesiastical matters, including toleration.

[1] James Madison to William Bradford, 1 April 1774, Papers of James Madison, I, 112-113.

Williamsburg and act according to their own prudence and the exigencies of the situation to exert pressure on the Assembly, using as their guidelines a paper drawn up by the Presbytery.[1] There is no extant copy of the Presbytery's guidelines on the toleration problem, and we have no report of Todd and Morton's mission.

We may assume they were in Williamsburg when the Assembly next met in May 1774, lobbying in behalf of the Presbyterian view of a toleration act. Perhaps their efforts were partly responsible for the order of the House to the Committee for Religion on 12 May to "bring in a Bill for allowing a free Toleration to his Majesty's Protestant Subjects in this Colony, who dissent from the Church of England."[2] This phrase from the journals would indicate that the committee was directed to prepare an entirely new bill rather than reconsidering the engrossed toleration bill from the 1772 session. The membership of the Committee for Religion of 1774 was almost identical with that of the 1772 committee which had prepared the harsh toleration bill. A few new members who might be expected to favor a very liberal bill such as Thomas Jefferson, Samuel

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 15 October 1773.

[2] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 12 May 1774, p. 92.

MacDowell, and Andrew Lewis probably could not sway the conservative churchmen in the group.[1]

The flood of dissenter petitions which Madison had predicted for this session did not materialize. Only three were presented, one from Baptist laymen protesting the ban on nighttime worship in the toleration bill of 1772;[2] and another from the General Baptist ministers of the Ketoctin Association in Loudon County asking that they and all Protestant dissenters be allowed to preach "in all proper places, and at all Seasons, without restraint."[3] The only Presbyterian petition came on May 17 from the Peaks of Otter Congregation in Bedford County. While this group prayed "the Protection of this Honourable House in the future, in the free exercise of their Religion," their specific request was not for a broad toleration act, but for the right of Presbyterian elders to be incorporated in order to hold and sell lands and slaves and receive bequests for the support of bona fide Presbyterian ministers.[4]

The committee report on these petitions was never presented, nor was the toleration bill, for on 26 May, Governor

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[1] For appointments to the committee see ibid., 7, 9, 10 May 1774.

[2] Ibid., 12 May 1774, p. 92.

[3] This petition, which apparently had been sent to the Committee of Propositions & Grievances before the Assembly opened, was referred from that group to the Committee for Religion on 16 May. Ibid., p. 102.

[4] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 551-553 (text).

Dunmore, in response to the Burgesses' appointment of June 1st as a day of prayer and fasting over the closing of the Port of Boston, prorogued the Assembly.

The Presbyterians felt justly frustrated at the failure of the Assembly to produce a new toleration bill in the spring of 1774, and at their October meeting in Charlotte County agreed to meet in November at Colonel William Cabell's in Amherst to remonstrate against the 1772 engrossed bill "for extending the Benefit of the Act of Toleration to his Majesty's Subjects, dissenting from the Church of England in the Colony of Virginia."[1] The petition was duly drawn up, and though consideration of it was deferred at the April 1775 Presbytery,[2] it was nonetheless presented to the session of the Assembly which Dunmore called for 1 June 1775.[3]

This petition, which Brydon calls "one of the most notable documents of the Revolutionary period in Virginia" is a model of logical persuasion composed probably by two native Virginians, David Rice of Hanover County, a student at Princeton under Samuel Davies, pastor of Peaks of Otter Congregation, and Caleb Wallace of Charlotte County, graduate of the College of

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 14 October 1774. Only four of the ministers were present: David Rice, Samuel Leake, William Irwin and Caleb Wallace.

[2] _Ibid_., 12 April 1775.

[3] _Journal of the House of Burgesses_, 5 June 1775, p. 189.

New Jersey under Witherspoon and newly-ordained minister of Cub Creek and Little Falling River Congregations.[1]

After reminding the Burgesses that Governor Gooch in 1738 had promised free exercise of their religion to Presbyterians coming to Virginia; that thousands had come and provided a shield against the Indians for those Virginians in the East; and that Presbyterian ministers and people had never been "restricted in their religious privileges by any Law of the Colony" the petition demonstrates point-by-point how provisions of the toleration bill of 1772 would restrict those religious privileges.

Presbyterians would gladly register all places of public worship, but they justified occasional itinerating, which Virginians seemed to fear so, by the example of Jesus and the Apostles who preached and taught everywhere, as well as the exigencies of scattered congregations which often had to worship in homes. This made it impossible for their ministers to be bound not to preach to groups of more than ten in a private home.

While they usually did not worship at night,[2] this practice was acceptable in city and collegiate churches; the

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes do not exist for this meeting, so we cannot be sure which ministers and elders attended. Rice as moderator and Wallace as clerk signed the petition. Brown, Waddel, and Todd probably had a voice in the matter as well.

[2] Although worship after sundown probably was a rare occurrence in eighteenth-century Virginia, the service of Evening Prayer is prominently included in the Book of Common Prayer.

Apostles themselves had done it, and it was sometimes necessary so that daytime employment not be interrupted.

They resented the unjust implication of disloyalty imposed by the requirement against locked doors and requested its removal.

Although they always try to get the consent of masters before baptizing slaves, it is nonetheless the duty of a minister to obey Christ's commandment to teach and baptize all nations, if that is what the slave desires. Furthermore, nothing in Presbyterian principles or form of worship tends to "promote a spirit of disobedience or disorder," so that no minister should be subject to penalty for preaching "any time or in any place" in Virginia.

Throughout their petition the presbytery firmly maintained that any offenses against the well-being of the state can be punished only by laws applying to all citizens in an equal manner, and that a bill granting religious liberties is not the place to single out particular denominations for infractions of civil codes. If fines must be assessed, let the legislature state them, rather than leaving them to the discretion of a magistrate.

The petitioners further urged that any toleration bill include a guarantee of "that freedom in speaking and writing upon religious Subjects which is allowed by Law to every member of the British Empire in civil affairs" and a guarantee of the right to hold property and receive legacies to support schools and churches--a right not written in the English act of toleration, but recognized in English courts.

The petitioners closed their plea with a stirring phrase that would be echoed often in a political context in the years ahead.

> The subject is of such solemn importance to us that, comparatively speaking, our lives and our liberties are but of little value; and the population of the County and the Honour of the Legislature as well as the interest of American Liberty are certainly most deeply concerned in the matter.[1]

The Burgesses tabled the petition.[2] On 24 June Dunmore prorogued the Assembly, its last full meeting as a colonial body.

After having presented such forceful views on the only form of toleration acceptable to them, there was nothing further the Virginia Presbyterians could do to advance their cause under the colonial government. Insofar as religious liberty is concerned, the Presbyterians were fortunate that events moved so swiftly towards independence after the prorogation of the assembly in June 1775. If the assembly had continued in session longer, the Committee for Religion may have presented a new toleration bill along more liberal lines than that of 1772 but, given the conservative composition of the committee, surely not as liberal as the suggestions of the presbytery. If such a bill had passed and been pleasing to dissenters, it is possible to speculate that the struggle for religious liberty which occupied the churches and the legislators periodically over the next decade might have been avoided, and Virginia might have retained some form of state supported religion.

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[1] Petition of the Hanover Presbytery, 11 November 1774 (presented 5 June 1775), Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 553-557.

[2] Journal of the House of Burgesses, 5 June 1775, p. 189.

As it was, however, the dissenters had received no gratification of any sort for their numerous justifiable complaints and were pleased at the opportunity the revolution provided them to improve their situation. The revolutionary conventions of 1775 had little occasion to consider religious matters, but the convention of May 1776, which instructed the Virginia delegates to Continental Congress to propose independence, appointed a committee to draft a declaration of rights, and this instrument afforded the dissenters their first ray of hope. The declaration was composed primarily by George Mason who proposed in his first draft the Lockean concept that "religion . . . can be governed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, that all men should enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion. . . ." Young James Madison, sitting in his first governmental body, indicated that worship was a right and proposed that "no man or class of men ought on account of religion to be invested with peculiar emoluments or privileges, nor subjected to any penalties or disabilities. . . ." If this amendment had been accepted, the convention would have been compelled to eliminate an established church in the new government. As a shy newcomer to politics, Madison could not have led a floor fight for the adoption of his amendment, and Patrick Henry refused to sponsor it, so Madison proposed a milder substitute. Mason accepted Madison's criticism of his use of the word "toleration" in the final version of the draft which the convention adopted, but he omitted Madison's reference to privileged and penalized sects.[1]

While the majority of the convention delegates probably interpreted this statement on religious freedom to mean an established church with liberal toleration of dissenters, the dissenters themselves interpreted it literally as an expansion of the concept of natural rights to include religion.[2]

When the first House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia convened on 7 October 1776, it was deluged with petitions from dissenters urging legislation complying with the spirit of the religion clause in the Declaration of Rights.

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[1] Marvin K. Singleton, "Colonial Virginia as First Amendment Matrix: Henry, Madison, and Assessment Establishment," A Journal of Church and State, VIII (Autumn 1966), p. 348; Gaillard Hunt, "James Madison and Religious Liberty," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1901, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), pp. 166-167; Irving Brant, James Madison: The Virginia Revolutionist (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1941), pp. 245-248.

[2] As Brant, James Madison, I, 249 points out, this was the first time any political body in the Christian world had recognized such a right.

Although nearly 10,000 dissenters, mainly Baptists signed one monster petition, the significant arguments for disestablishment were presented by several smaller groups of Presbyterians acting independently.

The first shot in the long battle over disestablishment was fired by Richard Sankey's Buffalo Congregation in Prince Edward County, which considered the religion clause in the Bill of Rights "the rising Sun of religious Liberty, to relieve us from a long night of ecclesiastic Bondage" and urged the Assembly to "make Virginia an Asylum for free enquiry, knowledge and the virtuous of every Denomination."[1]

Two petitions from Albemarle, Amherst and Buckingham Counties, signed largely by Presbyterians, presented the political argument that as the established church was part of the royal governmental structure when they moved to Virginia or became dissenters, they submitted to the arrangement. Now that a new government existed, there was no necessity for the old establishment, and all denominations should receive equal treatment as all had fought to establish the new government.[2]

The western Scots-Irish who, as the dominant group in their area, had long chafed under the restrictions of an established church, presented two strong arguments against an established church. Representatives of the militia companies and freeholders of Augusta drew a set of instructions to be binding on their Assembly delegates to work for the equality of all denominations and establishment of none.[1] The Augusta County Committee of Safety petitioned the legislature that taxes to support the established clergy imposed on dissenters an unequal burden "inconsistent with the Spirit of Taxation, that Supposeth all that are made Subject to such payments, Equaly Intrusted in all the advantages resulting from such Impositions."[2] Both of these western statements threatened action beyond Legislative remonstrances, namely secession from eastern Virginia, if the Assembly did not act to redress this religious grievance.

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[1] "Petition of Sundry Inhabitants of Prince Edward County" signed 24 September 1776, presented 11 October. Religious Petitions file, Archives Division, Virginia State Library.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 562-63. Presented 22 October 1776.

Caleb Wallace carried to Williamsburg the memorial of the Presbytery of Hanover, which presented the most polished version of Presbyterian thinking on religious liberty.[3] The Presbytery flatly declared that worship restrictions and taxes upon dissenters to support the established church violated their natural rights, and that they would rely on the legislature to secure to them the free exercise of religion as promised in the Declaration of Rights. From a political view they argued that magistrates are in no position to judge matters of religion without assuming "a chair of infallibility" leading back to Rome. In economic terms the Presbytery argued that the existence of an established church had kept many settlers from coming to Virginia. From the religious standpoint, the presbytery pointed out that religion did not need civil aid to flourish and that government should be concerned solely with "the security of the life, liberty, and property of the citizens." They therefore urged the immediate repeal of all laws favoring the Episcopal church, including taxation to support any religion.[1]

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[1] "Sentiments of the several companies of militia and the freeholders of Augusta . . . to their Representatives in the General Assembly" (Purdie) Virginia Gazette, 28 October 1776.

[2] Memorial of the County of Augusta, Religious Petitions file, Archives Division, Virginia State Library. Independence from Virginia was being considered in the west. Mays, Edmund Pendleton, II, 135.

[3] The circumstances of the drawing of this memorial are not known as the October 1776 Presbytery minutes have been lost.

Eckenrode feels that these petitions were the "outside stimuli" of the disestablishment struggle; that Jefferson and his supporters would have attacked the church anyhow, but found this unsolicited popular support useful.[2] Initially the petitions were referred to the Committee for Religion. The Speaker of the House, Edmund Pendleton, "a deeply religious man . . .

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[1] Memorial of Hanover Presbytery, Journal of the House of Delegates 1776 (24 October), pp. 24-25. Text in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 564-566.

[2] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 48.

devoted to the church of his boyhood" had appointed as its chairman his conservative friend Carter Braxton and named many other churchmen to it.[1] The presentation of the Augusta petition with its threat of secession moved the House to a sense of urgency. It was referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Country, as were all previous dissenter petitions.[2] It was here on the floor of the house that the real struggle for disestablishment occurred, and Presbyterians and other dissenters played virtually no role, for the great majority of delegates were churchmen. Jefferson later recalled that the debates were long and bitter; he led the liberals and Pendleton and Robert Carter Nicholas the churchmen.[3]

The liberal view seemed to triumph when on 19 November the house adopted a set of resolutions to guide a committee preparing a disestablishment bill. These were to include (1) repeal of acts making criminal the holding of any religious opinion; (2) exemption of all dissenters from taxes to support any church; (3) regulation of worship, the succession of the established clergy and regulation of their conduct; (4) the repeal of the acts to support the established clergy; and (5) the reservation to the established church of its property.[1] In spite of this hopeful beginning the churchmen in the house succeeded on 30 November in eliminating most of the resolutions except the exemption of dissenters from taxes for the church.[2] The bill to exempt dissenters from church levies was drawn up over the weekend, presented on 2 December, and passed a week later.[3]

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[1] Journal of the House of Delegates 1776, 8, 11 October, pp. 4, 7; David John Mays, Edmund Pendleton, 1721-1803: A Biography, Vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 129, 133-134.

[2] Journal of the House of Delegates 1776, 9 November, p. 48.

[3] The Presbyterian observer in Williamsburg, Caleb Wallace, commented that the affair ended with only "a day or two's debating in the House, and a little newspaper bickering." Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 51.

Although not professing to do so, this act which became effective 1 January 1777 in a sense disestablished the church by eliminating its guaranteed source of financial support. Unfortunately, defects in this act left the way open for controversy in the future. Because clergy salaries were suspended for only one year that question would come up again. One article in the act specifically deferred the question of a general assessment for all denominations, the only hope churchmen could count on to maintain an establishment. The act continued vestries in their function of poor relief which maintained a church-state relationship objectionable to many.[1]

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[1] _Journal of the House of Delegates_, 19 November 1776, p. 63.

[2] _Ibid_., 30 November 1776, p. 76.

[3] _Ibid_., 2 December 1776, p. 78.

We shall probably never know why the legislature failed to disestablish the church. Brydon suggests that the outcome of the revolution was so unsure in the fall of 1776 that prudent men did not wish to suffer the accusation of having abolished the church in addition to revolting against the crown. This seems a weak excuse for patriots, as many of these same men had unhesitatingly voted for independence in the spring and were willing to accept the consequences. Victorious England could hardly consider this attack on the church more heinous than political revolt. Likewise, it seems hard to believe that the civil functions of the vestry were "too deeply imbedded in the very life of the people to be destroyed before provision could be made for other agencies to carry on the duties." These functions could have been transferred easily to the county courts, and the people were long accustomed to complaining about vestries that dissatisfied them.[2]

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[1] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 52-53. Singleton in "Colonial Virginia as First Amendment Matrix" claims that the fact that this act specifically left open the assessment question "has not been sufficiently made clear," p. 348, and that its presence "suggests that Episcopalians were not utterly without bargaining power, even in 1776," p. 349. Eckenrode, whose interpretation Singleton criticizes, makes both of these facts patently clear, as does Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 404-405.

[2] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 402.

It seems better to conclude that a majority of the legislature still felt that some relationship between church and state was essential for the well-being of society,[1] and while they could concede that dissenters should not be taxed to support a church not of their choosing, they probably felt that in exempting them they were fulfilling their obligation to the religious clause in the Declaration of Rights.

Hanover Presbytery expressed its appreciation to the legislature for the exemption in a memorial of 25 April 1777 prepared by Samuel Stanhope Smith and David Rice and "would, therefore, have given our honourable Legislature no further trouble on this subject" except that the general assessment question remained open. In their belief that religious concerns are beyond civil control, the Presbyterians stated that they "should act a dishonest, inconsistent part, were we to receive any emoluments from human establishments for the support of the gospel."[2] The Assembly took no action on religious matters in the spring of 1777 aside from continuing the suspension of clergy salaries. Consideration of the presbytery memorial was deferred until the next Assembly.[3]

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[1] Some prominent Presbyterians concurred in this belief as seen in Samuel Stanhope Smith's letter to Jefferson on education in which he suggests that Presbyterians and Episcopalians join into one denomination as the established church. [March?, 1779], Papers of Thomas Jefferson, II, 255.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 327.

[3] Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia . . . 1777 (Richmond: Thomas W. White, 1827),

The presbytery, interpreting this deferment to mean that the Assembly "may come to a final determination concerning Church Establishments, at their next Session," appointed a committee to meet in September to take appropriate action.[1] For unexplained reasons the group did not meet; perhaps they heard that the expected action would not be taken. That was quite correct, and similarly, religious questions did not receive the attention of the Assembly in 1778 beyond the further suspension of clergy salaries.[2]

In the spring of 1779 the House turned to complaints received about the performance of vestries, and appointed a committee to write a vestry dissolution bill. This bill, presented on 12 June 1779 was one of Jefferson's contributions to the monumental revision of the Laws of Virginia which he, Wythe, and Pendleton had been appointed to write in the fall of 1776. At the same time a "bill for saving the property of the church heretofore by law established" was introduced as a sop to churchmen. The third reading of both bills was postponed until the next session.[3]

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17 May, p. 7; 21 May, pp. 27-28; 28 May, pp. 35-36; 29 May, p. 36; 3 June, p. 54.

[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 18 June 1777, 31 October 1777.

[2] _Journal of the House of Delegates 1777_, _passim_; Eckenrode, _Separation of Church and State in Virginia_, p. 55.

[3] Boyd, _Papers of Thomas Jefferson_, II, 547n; Eckenrode, _Separation of Church and State in Virginia_, p. 56.

At the fall 1779 session the House received several petitions regarding Jefferson's bill for religious liberty, with residents of Culpeper, Essex, and Amherst Counties preferring instead a general assessment. The latter group, whose signatures were enlisted at a militia muster, felt the bill was "subversive . . . of all religion and morality . . . and destructive to our civil liberties."[1] Another Amherst group heartily approved the bill and instructed their delegates to vote not only for "an universal toleration" but that all religions may be put on "the same footing and enjoy equal liberties and privileges."[2] These petitioners misinterpreted Jefferson's bill, for they spoke in terms of toleration and equal privileges, while he spoke of complete freedom in religious matters and privileges for no sects. The Presbyterians as a church took no official position on the bill.

The bill did not receive its third reading. Jefferson sat in the Governor's chair, and the churchmen took advantage of his absence to present instead a bill "concerning religion." This was a thoroughly conservative measure to incorporate the episcopal church, preserve its property, incorporate other Christian denominations desiring it, and enact a general assessment for the support of all denominations. The liberal group in the Assembly was strong enough to block the third reading of this bill, however.[1] Thus, by the end of 1779 the battle lines were drawn between freedom of religion and a degree of state support and regulation. After that, much acrimony was injected into the debate, but little originality.

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[1] Journal of the House of Delegates, 21 October 1779; Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 57-58; text in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 579-580.

[2] Amherst Petition, 1 November 1779, Religious Petitions file, Virginia State Library.

The religious struggle between 1779 and 1783 is a dreary tale of thrusts by liberals, speared on by Baptist petitions, and usually parried by the churchmen. The issues were peripheral to the question of religious liberty: dissolution of vestries; permanent repeal of the clergy salaries act; the right of dissenting ministers to perform marriages anywhere at any time. The only contribution of the Presbyterians was a memorial in 1780 asking the Assembly to "abstain from interfering in the Government of the Church" which the Augusta delegates, both Presbyterians, were to present. In June 1781 the Presbytery appointed a committee to prepare another memorial, but its contents and fate are unknown.[2]

The chief struggle over church-state relations began in 1784 when the legislature took up the general assessment issue. Hanover Presbytery, meeting simultaneously, on the initiative of John Blair Smith ordered Smith and James Waddel to prepare a memorial "upon Certain Infringements of religious Liberty which exist in this State."[1] Eckenrode calls this memorial, introduced on 26 May, "a vigorous and even radical document."[2] Smith and Waddel argued that the participation of dissenters in the Revolution should have been grounds for removing all "invidious and exclusive distinctions" conferred by the state on any one sect, but that many still existed. Their basic objection was that the Constitution of 1776 should have abolished the established church rather than leaving the matter to the "precarious fate of common law." Bitter experience had taught the Presbyterians that the legislature would not implement that freedom of conscience guaranteed them in the Declaration of Rights.

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[1] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 56-61.

[2] Ibid., pp. 58-73; Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 409-411; Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 28 April 1780, 24 October 1781.

Specifically, the Presbyterians objected that the legislature had reserved the property of the "established" church which all denominations had been taxed to provide; they also found it discriminatory that the Episcopal Church alone was incorporated to hold property. They objected that the marriage law wrung from the Assembly in 1780 still did not allow dissenting ministers complete freedom to perform marriages. And they invoked the revolutionary appeal of "taxation without representation" to the retention of vestries for poor relief because all citizens were taxed for this purpose, but only Episcopalians could belong to the vestries levying those taxes.

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 19, 20 May 1784.

[2] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 77.

Smith and Waddel modestly stated that Presbyterians had restrained their complaints about these matters during the war so as not to take advantage of that situation, but with the advent of peace they expected to receive "what is our clear and uncontestable right," and would "resent any attempt either at their present sessions or hereafter to continue those [inequalities] which we do now complain of."[1]

The opposite viewpoint was presented in two petitions the following week, one requesting a general assessment, and the other, from the Episcopal clergy, requesting the repeal of certain laws regulating church government, the incorporation of the clergy as a body empowered to regulate their own ecclesiastical government, and the reservation to that church of all its property.[2]

The Committee for Religion reported most of the Presbyterian and Episcopal requests reasonable and the House ordered bills prepared. The committee erred seriously in interpreting the Hanover Presbytery objection to incorporation of the

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Memorial, 26 May 1784; text in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 583-586.

[2] Journal of the House of Delegates, 4 June 1784, p. 36; Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 591-593.

Episcopal church as a request for incorporation of all denominations.[1] Although all the major church-state issues: general assessment, incorporation, public property, and legal privileges for Episcopalians, were raised in June 1784, none was settled. The bill to remove marriage restrictions did not pass the Senate. General assessment advocates did not press their cause, and the Episcopal incorporation bill was shelved until November.[2]

John Blair Smith had written to his old college friend James Madison just before the end of the assembly session to express his opposition to the incorporation bill and solicit Madison's influence against it. He objected to the assembly granting the Episcopal clergy the privilege of making their canons and by-laws because this implied the right of the government to legislate concerning religion, a right which the Presbyterians denied. "I am sorry," Smith wrote, "that Christian ministers should virtually declare their church a mere political machine. . . . every religious society in the State possesses full power to regulate their internal police."[3]

The proponents of incorporation and assessment had the summer of 1784 to marshal support for passage of these measures.

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[1] Journal of the House of Delegates, 8 June 1784, p. 43.

[2] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 80.

[3] J. B. Smith to Madison, 21 June 1784, quoted in Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 81.

Patrick Henry, who was known in May 1784 as a private supporter of a general assessment,[1] emerged as the public leader of this popular cause. The leadership of the opposition fell to James Madison, as Jefferson was in Europe as United States minister to France. The opening of the House for business on October 30 brought little immediate public response to the assessment question aside from petitions from Isle of Wight and Amelia favoring such a measure.

The issue had evoked a lively response among the dissenting sects nonetheless. Hanover Presbytery met at Timber Ridge in Rockbridge County on 27 October. Sentiment in the valley was strong against assessment, and William Graham, president of Liberty Hall and an ardent democrat, attacked an assessment. In this he had the unexpected opposition of John Blair Smith, who was "possessed of information on the subject that some kind of assessment would be established, and he could only choose what kind he would have."[2] Smith's information seems to have come from his friend and neighbor Patrick Henry, who had every reason to be confident of the success of his cause. The Presbytery appointed Smith and Graham a committee of two to prepare a memorial to the Assembly protesting certain continuing grievances of the Presbyterians. Expressing a bewilderment that the processes of legislatures in the new republic do not always turn on wheels of justice and logic, the Presbytery said "it is with pain that we find ourselves obliged to renew our complaints upon the subjects stated in our memorial last spring." In addition, they objected to the proposed incorporation of clergymen "independent of the religious communities to which they belong" on the grounds that independent ministers might be negligent of their duties, and that the measure gave the legislature illegal authority to regulate religious matters.

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[1] Edmund Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, 15 May 1784, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, VII, 260.

[2] Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 557; Sellers, "John Blair Smith," p. 212.

In the matter of an assessment, Graham and his western supporters bowed to the views of Smith, and the Presbytery approved on 28 October, five principles on which they would accept an assessment law. These principles are important, for they represent a considerable compromise with the earlier Presbyterian position opposing any legislative interference in religion.

1) Religion may not be legislated as a spiritual system but only in its civil aspect as a necessity for the existence and happiness of society.

2) Because religion is necessary to society, a general assessment can be made to support religious instruction.

3) Attachment to some religious community and public profession of belief in one God is an obligation of citizenship.

4) Each citizen may choose which denomination is to receive his assessment.

5) Twelve titheables from 150 families in a neighborhood shall be incorporated to direct expenditure of their assessed portion.[1]

In the text of the memorial, however, these principles were not spelled out so specifically. The authors expressed their desire that any assessment "be done on the most liberal plan," that nothing be done "inconsistent with the proper objects of human legislation or the Declaration of Rights as published at the Revolution" and stressed the first and fourth of their principles approved at Timber Ridge.[2]

The Presbytery had appointed Todd, Graham, Smith, and Montgomery to go to Richmond to present the memorial. They may have arrived on 11 November, the day the house went into a committee of the whole to discuss assessment. The high point of the day was a long debate between Patrick Henry and James Madison. Henry argued that religion was essential to the preservation of society and that the alarming low state of morals existing in Virginia resulted largely from the repeal of the law providing ministerial salaries. Madison did not deny the necessity of religion to the social order but demonstrated historically that pure religion was more corrupted than aided by establishment, that the state would benefit economically from complete religious liberty, and that the present state of morals was the result of the wartime changes rather than elimination of state support of religion.[1] Madison's clear logic did not prevail against Henry's impassioned oratory, and the House passed a resolution 47-32 that an assessment should be required to support the Christian religion. Geographically, the negative votes came almost exclusively from valley and piedmont counties where dissenters were strong. Henry was appointed chairman of a committee of ten tidewater churchmen named to write the general assessment bill.[2]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 28 October 1784.

[2] Memorial of Hanover Presbytery, October 1784, text in Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 336-338.

The presentation of the Hanover Presbytery memorial the following day could only have added joy to the hearts of the majority favoring the assessment, for here the very group that had provided intellectual leadership for the dissenters' cause throughout the colonial and revolutionary periods seemed to capitulate to a less idealistic vision of church-state relations. It is natural that Madison should have been disappointed in their position. Two days later he wrote to James Monroe that "The Presbyterian Clergy have remonstrated agst any narrow principles, but indirectly favor a more comprehensive establisht." Five months later he expressed his feelings in stronger language, declaring that Presbyterians "seem as ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down that which shut them out. I do not know a more shameful contrast than might be found between their memorials on the latter and former occasion."[1] Madison's reaction is partly the exaggeration of a man who feels his allies betrayed him and partly a misinterpretation of the Presbyterian petition. The memorial had argued that "it is absolutely necessary to the existence and welfare of every political combination of men in society, to have the support of religion and its solemn institutions," not the reverse. Therefore, legislators should seek the aid of religion, and if in doing so they find it necessary to provide financial support for religion in general with an assessment on all citizens, then let it be done "on the most liberal plan."[2] This was not a request that "a general assessment for the support of religion ought to be extended to those who profess the public worship of the Deity" as the clerk of the House of Delegates recorded in the journal and as Madison and others at the time generally interpreted it.

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[1] Brant, James Madison, II, 344-345.

[2] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 88.

It was indeed a political blunder on the part of the Presbytery to indicate its willingness to accept any plan of assessment. This went against the wishes of several of the ministers from the Valley and most of the members of their congregations. John Blair Smith seems primarily responsible for convincing the presbytery that an assessment was inevitable. It is quite possible that he looked forward to state support. Living in an area where Presbyterians were prosperous and prominent members of the local power structure, he may have had an entirely different view of church-state relations from those Valley residents who had always been on the periphery of power in Virginia. Smith was president of a college which had not hesitated to seek state support on two occasions, and his brother and predecessor had had the audacity to suggest to Thomas Jefferson in 1779 that the Anglicans and Presbyterians join as the established church.[1] Why Smith and the others in the Presbytery should have been moved by Henry's suggestion that they might have some voice in what sort of assessment was determined is hard to imagine, for they had repeatedly showered that Legislature with memorials and petitions regarding various aspects of religious liberties, but had seen few of their pleas acted upon.

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[1] Madison to Monroe, 14 November 1784, 12 April 1785 quoted in Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 90-91.

[2] Hanover Memorial text, Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 337.

The political blunder of the Presbyterians was not so great as that made by Patrick Henry, however. He did not rush his committee into preparing and presenting the assessment bill. On November 17 the committee of the whole considered other religious questions and by a vote of 62 to 23 resolved that an act should pass to incorporate all religious societies applying for a charter.[1] This was an issue toward which Presbyterians had already expressed strong opposition, and it was a mistake for Henry to allow its introduction before passage of the assessment with which they seemingly assented. His majority was so large that Henry could scarcely have envisioned the possibility either measure might not pass. Madison and other liberals on the religious questions had carefully planned their strategy, and on that same day Henry was unanimously elected governor of Virginia, which removed him immediately from the house.[2]

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[1] Petitions from the Board of Trustees of Hampden-Sydney 16 November 1776 and 1 June 1784, Journal of the House of Delegates; Samuel Stanhope Smith to Thomas Jefferson, March 1779, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, II, 248.

Alarmed by the action of the house in approving an incorporation measure on the 17th, John Blair Smith and John Todd, who had come to Richmond to present the presbytery memorial and lobby for a redress of the various dissenter grievances, composed a petition against incorporation and presented it the following day. This petition simply reiterated the view which Smith had often expressed that the clergymen should not be incorporated as a body separate from church membership and that the state cannot grant churches power to regulate their ecclesiastic affairs, for they already possess that right.[1]

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[1] Journal of the House of Delegates, 17 November 1784.

[2] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 90.

Both the incorporation and assessment measures were reported to the house early in December in somewhat weakened forms, probably in the hope of assuring greater support. The former measure provided for the incorporation of vestries as well as the clergy, secured the title of the property of the Episcopal Church, and designated a convention of parish delegates to arrange ecclesiastic affairs without legislative influence. The general assessment measure was titled "a bill establishing a provision for teachers of the Christian religion," an unusual phrase for Virginians, which made it seem more an educational than a religious measure, and it allowed an individual to designate his tax for the support of education rather than of a church. The incorporation bill was introduced first and debated on December 18, 20, and 21. Madison decided to save his energies to fight assessment, and voted for incorporation. It passed on 22 December by 47 to 38, a declining majority for its supporters. The assessment supporters, whom Madison had noted were "disheartened at the loss of Mr. Henry" were further alarmed when several southside and mid-state delegates voted against incorporation, and they rushed to introduce the assessment bill before their majority declined still further. The assessment measure was debated two days and was engrossed for its third reading by a close vote of 44-42. That evening the opponents of the measure must have talked long and hard, for the following day a motion was passed by 45 to 38 to postpone the third reading until November 1785. The house then resolved, as it had in the case of the harsh toleration bill of 1772, to print copies of the bill for public distribution so that voters could express their opinion on the measure to their delegates.[1]

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[1] Petition of Presbyterian Ministers against Incorporation, 18 November 1784, text in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 593-594.

The assessment bill produced a far greater outpouring of sentiment than even Madison could have imagined. His letters to Monroe in April 1785, at the time elections for the House of Delegates were being held throughout the state indicate some of the popular concern. Of the bill itself Madison wrote: "The Episcopal people are generally for it, tho I think the zeal of some of them has cooled. The laity of the other sects are equally unanimous on the other side." Two weeks later he wrote that "The Bill for a Genl. Assesst. has produced some fermentation below the Mountains & a violent one beyond them." Of the elections he noted on the following day that the assessment bill influenced the vote in several counties and cited one of its supporters who was replaced by an opponent.[1] Madison, at this very moment was being encouraged by George and Wilson Cary Nicholas, ardently democratic sons of that staunch old conservative Robert Carter Nicholas, to write and circulate a remonstrance against the bill. Madison was reluctant at first but by early summer was at work on the project.

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[1] Brant, James Madison, II, 344-347; Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 94-103. Singleton, "Colonial Virginia as First Amendment Matrix," pp. 350-357.

Meanwhile, the Presbyterians initiated their own reaction to their previous wavering stand on the assessment issue. In mid-May they held their semi-annual presbytery meeting at Bethel Church in Augusta, at which time Smith reported on the lobbying excursion to Richmond in the fall of 1784. The presbytery, with an unusually large attendance of thirteen ministers, approved the report, but received a petition from the session of Augusta Congregation "requesting an Explication of the word Liberal, as used in the Presbytery's Memorial of last Fall; as also the motives & end of the Presbytery in sending it to the Assembly." Moses Hoge who had advocated a strong anti-assessment stand the previous fall, was named to the committee of two to prepare an answer to this congregation which was in effect rebelling against the authority of the Presbytery. The Presbytery next entertained a motion to vote "whether they do approve of any kind of an Assessment by the

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[1] Madison to Monroe, 12 April, 27 April, 28 April 1785, quoted in Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 103-104.

General Assembly for the support of Religion" and this time voted unanimously against such a measure.[1]

Thus John Blair Smith's leadership of the preceding presbytery was firmly rejected in favor of the popular sentiment. Smith himself may have undergone a change of feeling toward the legislature, in part because of the act incorporating the Episcopal Church which he had vigorously opposed and partly over a personal grievance with a prominent Episcopalian in the assembly. Carter Henry Harrison reportedly said "The greatest curse which heaven sent at any time into this Country was sending Dissenters into it." Smith seems to have taken this as a personal insult and was stopped short of seeking redress only by Madison's advice.[2]

Rather than preparing its usual memorial to the assembly the presbytery bowed to pressure from the general membership and took a vote of clergymen and laymen present whether to hold an unprecedented General Convention. They agreed unanimously to do so and ministers and several laymen present signed an invitation to all Presbyterians to send delegates to Bethel Church on 10 August 1785. Perhaps as a gesture of general good will over the assessment issue, the presbytery asked Smith to preach the sermon at the convention.[1] The presbytery made every effort to assure that the convention would be a truly representative body and advertised in the Virginia Gazette beginning on 4 June 1785 for every church in the state to send delegates.[2]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 19 May 1785.

[2] Sellers, "John Blair Smith," p. 213 quoting from Smith to Madison, May 1785 and Madison to Smith, 27 May 1785.

In the meanwhile Madison had prepared his "Memorial and Remonstrance" which the Nicholas brothers circulated privately then had printed and widely distributed in July, including a run in the Virginia Gazette. Most of the fifteen arguments Madison presented he had used in his debate with Patrick Henry in the Assembly in November 1784. Numerous copies of the remonstrance were circulated for signatures to be presented to the Assembly when it met.[3]

Although acknowledging the importance of Madison's Remonstrance and the work of George Nicholas in circulating it, Eckenrode feels the decision of the evangelical churches to oppose the assessment was more important.[4] The Presbyterians assembled at Bethel Church on 10 August 1785, and because the minutes of the meeting have been lost we cannot know precisely how successful the effort to secure a large representation was. Because the issue was of such general interest, it is likely that most of the congregations sent ministers or lay delegates or both, and that there was near unanimity of sentiment on what views to present the Legislature. The memorial approved by the group is thought to have been written by William Graham but contained almost nothing original. The first half concerned the assessment bill, and contained twelve objections to it, all save one of which were included in similar language in Madison's Remonstrance. In general, the Presbyterians maintained that religious affairs were not a proper concern of a civil legislature, that religion was a natural right whose existence was not dependent upon a government and whose form was purest without government interference. Because this particular bill disgusted many citizens, it created a general disrespect for law, it granted special privileges to Quakers and Mennonites, established a precedent for the selection of a favored sect as well as the favored Christian religion and opened the way to dissension among sects. From an economic viewpoint it could encourage emigration of worthy citizens from the state. But most objectionable of all, it violated the sacred principles in the Declaration of Rights.[1]

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[1] Hanover Presbytery Minutes, 19 May 1785, 21 May 1785.

[2] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 106.

[3] Brant, James Madison, I, 350.

[4] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 106.

Madison presented all these arguments in a similar order, but included three others: that the establishment of

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[1] Memorial of the Ministers and Lay Representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia, 13 August 1785. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, I, 342-343.

Christianity departs from American policy of offering asylum to the persecuted of all lands and faiths; that the bill would work to the detriment of the spread of Christian teaching; and most important, that it should not be imposed without evidence that a majority of citizens had called for it which would be almost impossible to determine in the Virginia Assembly where representation was so unequal.[1] The Presbyterians, in turn included one objection not voiced by Madison: they claimed the bill would deprive non-Christians of their property for the support of a religion they did not believe. Here the Presbyterians overlooked the provision in the bill permitting such persons to designate their taxes for education rather than a religious body.

The General Assembly, which convened on 24 October 1785 was deluged with dozens of petitions about the assessment bill. Nine petitions signed by 876 citizens from Mecklenburg, Essex, Westmoreland, Pittsylvania, Lunenburg, Surry, Amelia, and Halifax counties favored the bill. Opposing the bill were forty-two petitions circulated in thirty-four counties containing about 7,000 signatures. Many of these were based on Madison's Remonstrance and many were efforts for Baptist groups.

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[1] "Madison's Remonstrance," text in C. F. James, Documentary History of the Struggle for Religious Liberty in Virginia (Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bell Co., 1900), pp. 256-258.

One was signed by 344 Quakers.[1] In addition to this large group of miscellaneous petitions, the Presbyterians presented a block of petitions supporting the memorial drawn by the Bethel Convention. This represented by far the best-coordinated effort of opposition to any measure that the Virginia Assembly had ever seen. The general form adopted for the majority of these petitions was simply

> We the subscribers having Read and Maturely considered a memorial drawn by a Convention of the Ministers and Lay Representatives of the Presbyterian body in Virginia Conven'd at Bethel in Augusta the 10th of August 1785 do hereby most heartily adopt & approve the same, and pray that the Honourable house of Delegates will receive it and give it that weight its importance deserves &c.[2]

These nineteen Presbyterian petitions were organized on a congregational basis. From the northern valley came one from Hugh Vance's Tuscarora congregation in Berkeley, another from residents of Frederick and Berkeley Counties, one from Frederick alone, and another possibly from Shenandoah County. A German congregation under the Reverend Jacob Revers, probably in Rockingham County, also acquiesced to the Presbyterian memorial. From the southern part of the valley came endorsements from residents of Augusta and Botetourt dated 12 September, Graham's petition from Augusta and Rockbridge residents, and Rockbridge citizens petition of 14 September. From Augusta County petition of three congregations, Concord, Bethel, and Augusta Stone Church, can be identified by name. Only two petitions from the Presbyterian stronghold in the Southside can be identified: that of Richard Sankey's Buffalo Church in Prince Edward of 7 October and another that may be from Briery Church in Prince Edward. There remain six petitions which cannot be identified as they were not signed by a minister. One may have come from Cub Creek congregation in Charlotte County. Another contains very few Scots-Irish names and may be from an eastern congregation such as John Todd's. The others are undoubtedly from various groups in the valley or in Albemarle or Amherst Counties where many Scots-Irish had settled.[1] There are about 1,100 signatures to these Presbyterian protests, and, like the Baptists, probably many other Presbyterians signed copies of Madison's Remonstrance and other nondenominational petitions.

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[1] Religious Petitions Calendar, Virginia State Library, Archives Division.

[2] Envelope folder of Presbyterian petitions presented to the House 12 November 1785, Religious Petitions, Virginia State Library, Archives Division.

It would be a mistake, as Eckenrode points out, to assume that the much greater response of the opponents of assessment indicates that the overwhelming majority of Virginians opposed assessment. It simply indicates that the opponents of assessment had organized an effective campaign against the bill, while its advocates made little effort in its behalf, for the

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[1] Religious Petitions, Virginia State Library, Archives Division.

Episcopal Church did not mount a campaign to collect petitions at all.

After raising such a furor throughout the state, the most remarkable fact about the "bill for establishing a provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion" is that there is not a single mention of it in the Journal of the House of Delegates for the fall of 1785. The petitions were all referred to the Committee for Religion, chaired by Zachariah Johnston of Augusta County, an ardent Presbyterian, and whose members included James Madison, Wilson Cary Nicholas, and French Strother, all powerful opponents of assessment. The bill itself was considered by the committee of the whole, at which time John Blair Smith testified against it on behalf of the Presbytery of Hanover. The measure was rejected in committee, and because it was not reported to the House as a rejected bill, it is possible that the entire measure had been tacked as an amendment to another bill, probably the bill for religious freedom.[1]

This defeat of the assessment plan in committee, even though the vote may have been close, marked the death of state aid to any religion, and therefore in effect gave religious liberty to Virginia. This was, however a negative rather than a positive guarantee, and the official triumph came with the passage of Jefferson's bill for religious freedom. Upon the heartening response to his Remonstrance and the Bethel Convention, Madison reintroduced the bill for religious freedom in the committee for religion. It was brought before the House on 14 December 1785, amended in committee, and came up for a third reading 17 December. A motion to postpone this reading, the very action which had killed the bill in 1779, was defeated resoundingly, and the bill passed 74 to 20, with only a few die-hard churchmen from tidewater counties voting against it. The House rejected a subsequent Senate amendment, committees from the two bodies conferred, amendments to amendments were made and accepted, and on 16 January 1786 passed the monumental "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" which, following a lengthy and noble preamble, declared

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[1] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 113, says Foote incorrectly credits the committee of the whole with rejecting the entire bill by a vote of three and points to Hugh Blair Grigsby's logic that the bill must have been an amendment to another bill as explanation for the fact that it is not mentioned in the Journal.

> That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.
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> And though we well know that this assembly elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare that the

rights hereby asserted are the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.[1]

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[1] Hening's Statutes, XII, 84.

EPILOGUE

One might suppose this chronicle of the struggle for religious liberty in Virginia should terminate with a noble event, the passage of Jefferson's bill. But the fact was less happy. There followed a twenty-year aftermath of squabbles unbecoming to Christians before the last vestige of state regulation of religious affairs was abolished.

The successful campaign against the general assessment bill, followed immediately by the passage of the statute for religious freedom seems to have encouraged the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists (who had separated from the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1784) to press for further gains. The time was well-chosen, for the Episcopal Church was on the defensive. The newly organized national church was split over the consecration of bishops by the Scottish or the English church, and Virginians were without a bishop altogether because they could not or would not raise the money to send the minister elected as bishop to England for consecration.[1]

The former dissenting churches had two major complaints against the Episcopal Church, which John Blair Smith had voiced in the memorial of Hanover Presbytery presented to the assembly in May 1784 against restrictive laws: that the legislature set standards for the government of the Episcopal Church when this was not properly a civil concern; and that the property of the church, which had been purchased with taxes levied on all citizens, many who were not members of that church, was nonetheless reserved for the exclusive use of the Episcopal Church.

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 452-469.

Although the Presbyterians were the first to object to the incorporation act, the Baptists probably provided the greatest pressure for repeal in the fall of 1786.[1] Their General Committee drew up a petition for the repeal of the act and the sale of the glebes, and petitions to the same effect presented to the legislature in the fall of 1786 from twenty-four different counties were, with the exception of Augusta and Albemarle Counties, from areas of Baptist strength. The main arguments of these petitions were (1) that the incorporation act violated the state Bill of Rights by keeping a connection between church and state; (2) that some of the canons of the new Episcopal Church differed from those of the Church of England, thereby making Episcopalians merely another group of dissenters rather than a continuation of the Anglican Church; and (3) that church property had not been the freewill gift of the people, but had been wrested from them by the law. The Episcopal Church defended itself through petitions from various parishes in the Tidewater and Southside in support of the incorporation act, as well as through a petition from the standing committee of the church.[1]

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[1] This inactivity on the part of the Presbyterians may have been the result of the preoccupation of their ministers with the division of the large Presbytery of Hanover into two: Lexington and Hanover, and the formation of the Synod of Virginia. E. T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, Volume One (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), pp. 51, 117.

The majority of the House of Delegates favored repeal of the incorporation act and directed that such a bill be brought in. This was passed in January 1787 with no struggle. This act marked the actual end of any official church-state relationship in Virginia more completely than Jefferson's more famous statute, but not the end of the religious struggle, for the thorny problem of the ownership and disposal of the property still reserved for the Episcopal Church had to be resolved.[2]

Although Presbyterians had played an inconspicuous role in the 1786 movement for repeal of incorporation, they had initiated the movement to seize church property in their memorial of May 1784 in which they complained that:

> An estate computed to be worth several hundred thousand pounds in churches, glebes, etc.,derived from the pockets of all religious societies was exclusively and unjustly appropriated to the benefit of one, without any compensation or restitution to the rest, who in many places were a large majority of the Inhabitants.[3]

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[1] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 116-128.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

[3] Text in Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 583-586.

Because the question of the glebes and other Episcopal Church property had been omitted from the repeal of the incorporating act, the Presbyterians again took up the cry at their convention at Bethel Church in Augusta on 29 August 1787. In a petition signed by John Brown as chairman, the Presbyterians contended that the Episcopal Church had no legal claim to the property reserved for its exclusive use by the legislature

> As she differs from the Church of England, in the articles of her faith, the plan of her discipline, and the ceremonies of her worship; she is no more the same than the church of England is the same with the church of Rome.

The only pretext for identity between the old Anglican and the new Episcopal churches, the Presbyterians maintained, was common membership in both churches, and that they rejected, for many of their members as well as Baptists and Methodists could also claim having belonged to the old church. The glebes and churches had been purchased with "the common property of all citizens of all denominations" to provide convenient places of worship for all people. To take this common property, designed for common benefit, and "bestow upon this infant church, to the exclusion of a great majority of the community is too glaring a piece of injustice to pass unnoticed, or to be suffered to continue in a free country."[1]

The assembly convened in mid-October, and on 4 December considered in committee of the whole the Presbyterian memorial as reported by a special committee. The test of sentiment on the issue was made in the proposition of a resolution to sell for public purposes the glebes in parishes having no Episcopal minister. The resolution was defeated 62 to 45 in a vote that could hardly be called a radical-conservative or an east-west split, for among those opposing the sale were some of the outstanding spokesmen for human rights and the revolutionary cause such as George Mason, George Nicholas, Paul Carrington, Benjamin Harrison, and James Monroe. Even a number of western delegates, including Daniel Boone, voted against the resolution.[1]

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[1] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 131-132.

The Presbyterian arguments in this 1787 memorial are a complete misrepresentation of facts, and most of the delegates seemed to recognize this. The Protestant Episcopal Church did not consider itself a completely separate church from the Church of England. Its articles of faith were not different. The discipline and liturgy were changed only insofar as the political separation from England necessitated, and even then the new national church hastened to make arrangements for the consecration in England of bishops for America. It was not true that the only pretext for identity was a single body of members, for the Presbyterian ministers who wrote this memorial chose to overlook the fact that the ministers as well as the members of the "old" and "new" churches were one and the same. Their claim that glebes were bought with money extorted from "all citizens of all denominations" was a gross misrepresentation of fact. The great majority of the glebes were purchased and churches built prior to 1750, at which time the number of dissenters in Virginia was very small indeed. The taxes which dissenters paid as their number increased after the evangelical revival and immigration went primarily to the upkeep of property already purchased or donated for the church. There were only a few parishes, in the western counties where Presbyterians were a majority, in which taxes levied on dissenters actually purchased church property for the minority membership of the established church.[1] Furthermore, the entry of the legislature into a hassle over sequestering church property would constitute as much an interference in religious matters as those infringements the Presbyterians and Baptists had complained so bitterly of before.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

Rebuffed in this attempt to dispossess the Episcopal Church of property, the Presbyterians withdrew from the official struggle, although they continued to maintain a private interest in the fate of the issue, and left it to the Baptists who entered the lists in 1789 with a memorial demanding sale of the glebes and use of the churches for all sects. Once more house sentiment opposed the idea by postponing consideration of the memorial. Thereafter, with dreary regularity, the Baptists introduced their annual memorial to sell the glebes, fortified by petitions to the same effect from various counties. In 1796 the Episcopal church finally stepped forward to defend its ownership of the property and presented a memorial. Resolutions backing each position were introduced and received about equal support, so were tabled. By the 1797 legislative session, however, the tables had turned. The radical influence of the French revolution seems to have infused even the House of Delegates with anti-clericalism, and in January 1798 the house passed by a vote of 97 to 51 a bill to repeal all acts of assembly which had reserved property to the Episcopal Church. However, the house could not accept the emasculating Senate amendments, so the bill died. The following year, however, the Senate relented and the measure was adopted. This cleared the way for the act of December 1801 for the sale of the glebes and common use of the churches, which passed 126-39 and was finally adopted with Senate amendments in January 1802.[1]

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[1] Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church, II, 496-497; Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, p. 130.

The Episcopal Church, whose membership and income had been declining since 1785, partly under the uncertainty of her legal position, partly because of the successful evangelical revival of the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians in 1787-1790, and partly because of the simultaneous increase of secularism, suffered greatly from the deprivation of the property on which her ministers depended for a home and farm in the face of dwindling congregational support. But it was the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia who were the greatest losers under this measure to seize the glebes which their ardently democratic leaders had pushed so energetically. The advocates of the bill had no real goal, it would seem, aside from retribution for the injustices they had felt as dissenters against the old established church, for they presented no positive program for the use of funds to arise from the sale of these lands. Had the money gone to the state to be placed in trust for a major public purpose, it is possible that the beginnings could have been made on a public high school system, or that a modern university such as Jefferson envisioned could have resulted. Instead, the proceeds of the sales were kept locally on the theory that the money should belong to the descendants of those who were taxed to provide the churches and glebes. Sales were conducted not by county courts, but by the local overseers of the poor, generally weak groups which had been assigned the former civic responsibilities of the vestries, and the use of proceeds was to be directed by local voters. The uses included local poor relief, occasional aid to struggling local academies, local work houses, and probably all too often to the aid of local politicians.

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[1] Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia, pp. 134-147.

The long years of legislative squabbling over church property must have left many Virginians who had espoused the cause of religious liberty thoroughly disgusted with the outcome of their struggle. Nonetheless, this bitter conclusion cannot dim the glory of their accomplishment when viewed in historical perspective. The religious clause in the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the defeat of the concept of assessment, and the passage of the Statute for Religious Freedom were truly revolutionary accomplishments, and the Virginia Presbyterians deserve a significant share of the credit for the success of these measures. They were among the earliest, most ardent, and most persistent advocates of more liberal relations between the government and the churches. It was their leaders who provided the rationale first for a broader toleration and later, when the cause had gained many prominent public supporters, for complete religious liberty. For a group that may never have numbered more than ten per cent of the Virginia population this was a significant accomplishment, as well as a major contribution to democracy as it developed in America.

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VITA

I, Katharine Brown, was born Katharine Burwell Lowe on 3 August 1940 in Parkersburg, Wood County, West Virginia to Malcolm Jackson Lowe and his wife, the former Eleanor Chancellor Burwell. I attended local public schools through the tenth grade and graduated from St. Catherine's School in Richmond, Virginia in 1958. I attended Hollins College, Virginia where I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and graduated with honor with a major in history in June 1962. From September 1962 through May 1966 I was a graduate student in residence with the history department of The Johns Hopkins University under a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, a University Fellowship, and a Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship. In the summer of 1963 I worked on the Historic Annapolis, Inc. project to index the colonial records of Maryland. I am married to John Madison Brown.

PLATE I

GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS OF VIRGINIA

Each • represents a Presbyterian congregation 1740-1785

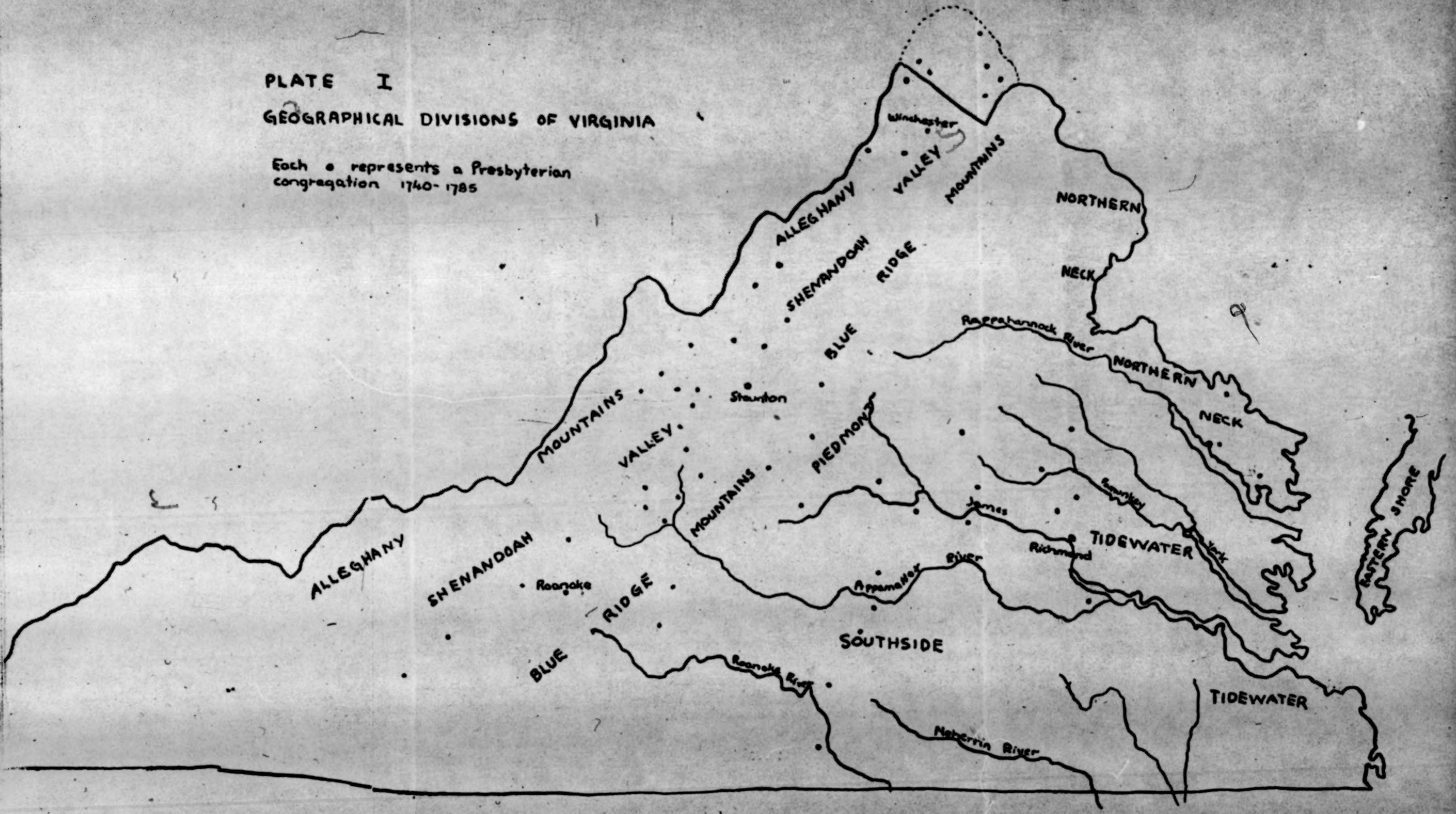
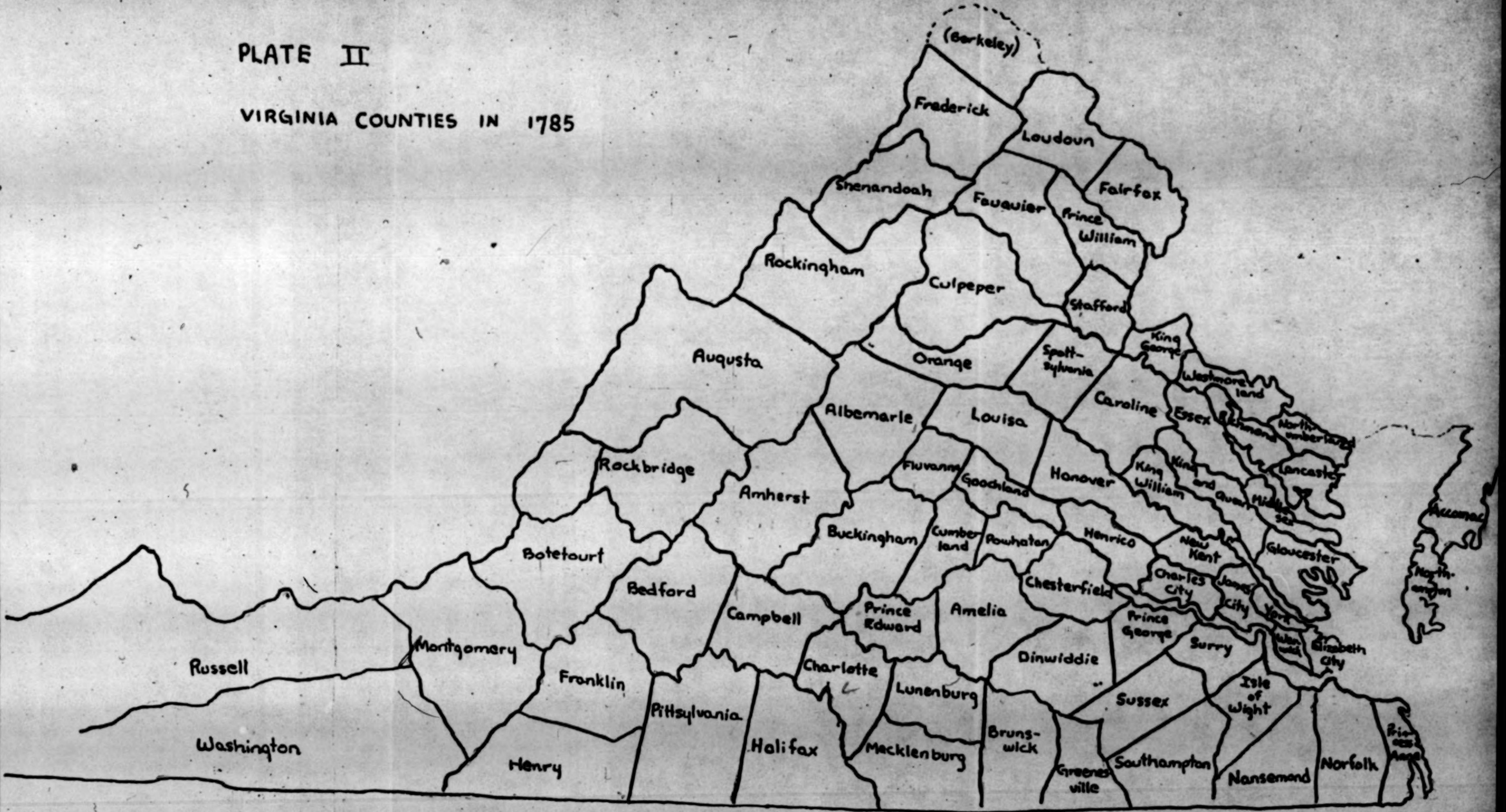

Winchester
ALLEGHANY
VALLEY
MOUNTAINS
NORTHERN
NECK
SHENANDOAH
RIDGE
BLUE
Rappahannock River
NORTHERN
NECK
Staunton
MOUNTAINS
VALLEY
PIEDMONT
MOUNTAINS
Pamunkey
James
TIDEWATER
Richmond
York
EASTERN SHORE
ALLEGHANY
SHENANDOAH
Roanoke
RIDGE
BLUE
Appomattox River
SOUTHSIDE
Roanoke River
Meherrin River
TIDEWATER

PLATE II

VIRGINIA COUNTIES IN 1785


(Berkeley)
Frederick
Loudoun
Shenandoah
Fauquier
Fairfax
Prince William
Rockingham
Culpeper
Stafford
King George
Westmoreland
Augusta
Orange
Spottsylvania
Caroline
Albemarle
Louisa
Essex
Richmond
Northumberland
Lancaster
Accomac
Northampton
Rockbridge
Amherst
Fluvanna
Goochland
Hanover
King William
King and Queen
Middlesex
Buckingham
Cumberland
Powhatan
Henrico
New Kent
Gloucester
Botetourt
Bedford
Campbell
Prince Edward
Amelia
Chesterfield
Charles City
James City
York
Prince George
Surry
Warwick
Elizabeth City
Russell
Montgomery
Franklin
Charlotte
Lunenburg
Dinwiddie
Sussex
Isle of Wight
Washington
Henry
Pittsylvania
Halifax
Mecklenburg
Brunswick
Greenesville
Southampton
Nansemond
Norfolk
Princess Anne